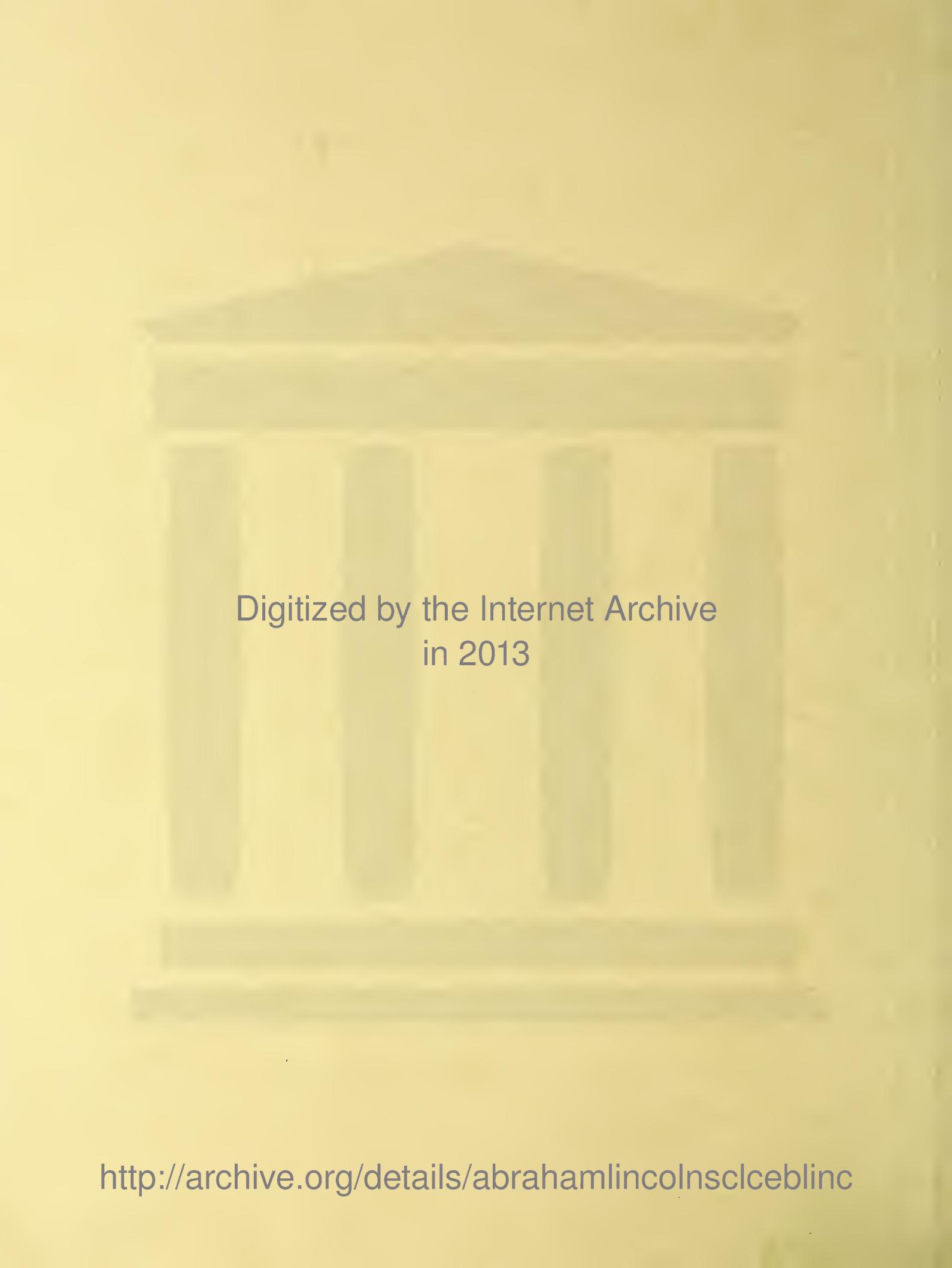


BOOTH, EDWIN

DRAWER 10C

CONTEMPORARIES

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Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

Edwin Booth

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Edwin Booth Joins Shakespearean Summerfest

When Dorothy Swerdlove was asked to prepare a display on the actor Edwin Booth's Shakespearean roles for the New York Public Library's part in Shakespeare Summerfest, her biggest problem was how to limit herself to the one big round case set aside for the exhibition.

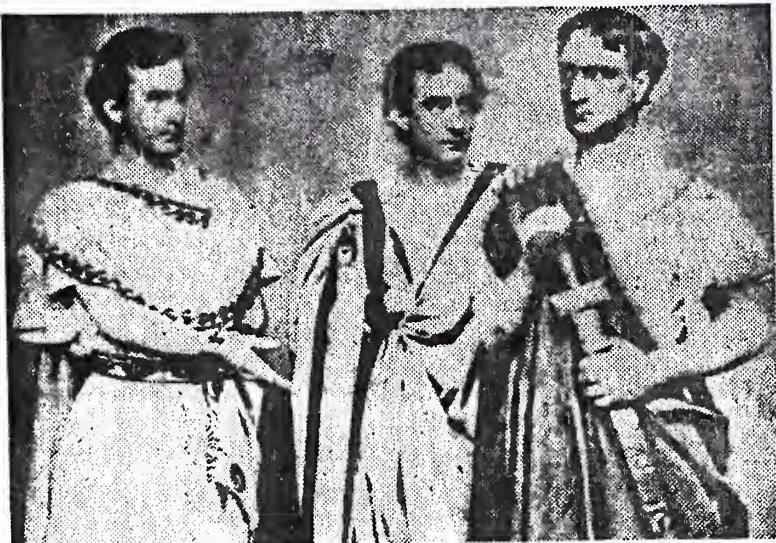
"It was hard to choose," said Miss Swerdlove, the curator of the Billy Rose Theater Collection of the Performing Arts Research Center at Lincoln Center, as she showed a visitor the display the other day. "Especially since he did so many Shakespearean plays. He was really our greatest Shakespearean actor."

What Miss Swerdlove chose for the display, which can be seen on the third floor of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center until Sept. 26, are photographs, promptbooks, correspondence, programs, scenery directions and a few props that together outline the career of the prolific actor, from his first appearance on stage in 1849 in a bit part in "Richard III" (his father, Junius Brutus Booth, played the lead) to his last performance, as Hamlet, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1891. The exhibition can be seen from noon to 5:45 P.M., Monday through Saturday.

Henry, With a Petruchio Chaser

Edwin Booth had an impressive repertory as well as a compelling acting style — less flamboyant than that of his father, whose picture was in the locket the son wore on stage in many of his most famous roles. "Sometimes he would do 'Henry VIII' with two acts of 'Taming of the Shrew' to follow," Miss Swerdlove said. "They must have had prodigious memories in those days."

The Booth family produced three acting sons, all of whom appeared to have learned their trade from their father. "Edwin was greatly loved," Miss Swerdlove said. "John Wilkes was the most glamorous. And Junius Jr. — I think he was the most stodgy. They



The Booths played in "Julius Caesar" at New York's Winter Garden in 1864. From the left are the brothers John Wilkes, Edwin and Junius Brutus Jr.

more or less divided the country among themselves, deciding who would play where." In the exhibition is a photograph and program from the only performance the three brothers did together — a production of "Julius Caesar" staged to raise money for a Shakespeare statue in Central Park. Four months later, in April 1864, John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln.

"John's assassination of the President really crushed the family," Miss Swerdlove continued. "Among Edwin's things was a copy of a newspaper account announcing the assassination. There is also John's letter to Edwin saying that this should not be a slur on the family. But I think I read somewhere that Edwin just about destroyed all traces of his brother after that."

The Edwin Booth memorabilia were drawn from the Billy Rose Collection

— some salvaged from impending disposal by Paul Myers, the former curator, who heard about "some Booth stuff" found in a house in Millbrook, N.Y. Other items were donated to the collection by a relative of the actor.

"This is just a tiny fraction of the Booth collection," Miss Swerdlove said. "We've got a load of things. We had enough of Edwin Booth's hair to make a wig — they seem to have taken a lock of hair for almost any occasion in those days. We had pincers from his coffin. There are beautiful letters from him to his wife — great romantic letters from the 19th century."

One item on display at Lincoln Center is a letter from Edwin Booth to the poet James Russell Lowell describing an impending "international contest," a performance of "Othello" with Tommaso Salvini, an Italian actor, in the

title role. While Salvini spoke his lines in Italian, Booth, as Iago, spoke in English. "They acted together in other plays," Miss Swerdlove said. "In 'Hamlet,' Salvini played the ghost. I think they also did 'King Lear' with Salvini playing Lear and Booth playing Edgar."

Edwin Booth was concerned with dignifying the actor's life as well as his art. "Actors were not much of anything in society," Miss Swerdlove said. "The reason Edwin Booth founded the Players Club was so that actors would be treated like gentlemen."

*N.Y. Times
8/21/81*

1881
Booth's Bad Investment.

A Newport, R. I., special says: "Boothden, the summer residence of Edwin Booth, the actor, is for sale. It is situated on Indian avenue and commands a fine view of the Atlantic, and has been made a most charming spot. Mr. Booth has expended between \$40,000 and \$50,000 upon it. He has had boat and bathing-houses erected and a steam engine to pump water up into his house and it is provided with the most thoroughly complete modern arrangements. There are about eleven acres of the ground. Mr. Booth's friends say that he has made professional engagements which will take him away for several years. He is going to the Pacific slope, and thence to London and Berlin, and finally will make a long professional visit to Australia. Mr. Booth offered to lend the place to his daughter, but she has no desire for it, and he has determined to get rid of it. He will let the place until he can find a purchaser. Friends of Booth say he has never been comfortable since he came here, feeling the loss of society.

1881
MYSTERIOUS ASSAILANTS.

1881
Attempts to Mak Away with the Brother of Edwin Booth.

Special Dispatch to the *Globe-Democrat*.

LONG BRANCH, N.J., December 16.—Dr. Joseph A. Booth, the only living brother of Edwin Booth, the tragedian, has been made the victim of a series of malicious persecutions which would have driven most men out of town. He has lived for several years in a handsome cottage in Ocean avenue, near the Atlantic Hotel. A few nights ago an attempt to kill or badly injure Dr. Booth was deliberately made by some unknown persons. The Doctor is connected with the outdoor poor department of the Board of Charities and Corrections at the foot of East Twenty-sixth street, New York. He does not return home until evening.

On the night in question he did not leave the city until after 10 o'clock. A few moments before he reached his cottage there came a knock at the front door. Miss Rosalie Booth, his aged sister, who is living with him, answered the summons. As she opened the door some miscreant hurled a heavy brick at her head, striking the door-casing a few inches from her head. At the same time a number of stones and a quantity of gravel were thrown at the door and windows of the house. Miss Booth shut the door and called the servants, who secured all the doors and windows. The next morning Dr. Booth found the piece of brick, which weighed about two pounds, on the plazza, near the front door. Where it struck the door casing there was a deep dent. Dr. Booth is confident that the man who threw the piece of brick thought the doctor himself would open the door, and that the object of the assault was to kill him or disfigure him for life. Dr. Booth has laid all the facts in the case before Inspector Byrnes, of New York.

1881
MODJESKA AND BOOTH.

1881
The Reported Disagreement Emphatically Denied.

Special Dispatch to the *Globe-Democrat*.

NEW YORK, November 11.—The publication in the *Herald* yesterday of a reported disagreement between Mme. Modjeska and Mr. Booth created an unusual amount of comment, and people in every walk of life who had seen the two stars of the dramatic profession and those who had only read or heard of the successes of the Booth-Modjeska combination were busy making inquiries. Messrs. Nixon and Zimmerman denied having made overtures to have Mme. Modjeska break her contract. The following letter was received by the *Herald* in reference to the matter:

To the Editor of the *Herald*: "I have been deeply pained by the publication in your paper this morning of an article reflecting upon the relations existing between Mr. Booth and Mr. Barrett on the one hand and my husband and myself on the other. I should think that the solitary truth in the entire column, namely, that I "have been singularly free from scandalous reports during my long career on the stage," would have led both your informant and yourself to play a more chivalrous role than the publication of an anonymous piece of malicious gossip. Permit me through your columns to answer your readers that the article is without foundation from beginning to end. Every statement in it is so false and so silly as not even to warrant a denial in detail. I do wish to state, however, for the information of my friends that the relations between Mr. Barrett and Mr. Booth and my husband and myself are cordial and friendly. Hoping that you will do me the justice of giving to this denial equal prominence with your false report which has called it forth, I remain, respectfully yours,

HELENA MODJESKA."

The following letter was published in the *Evening Telegram*:

"To the Editor of the *Evening Telegram*: SIR—I desire to state that the interview with me, as reported in this morning's *Herald*, is false, and that there is not one word of truth in the statement that there is or has been any disagreement or unpleasantness of any kind between Mme. Modjeska and myself. Respectfully yours, EDWIN BOOTH."

1881
Edwin Booth as an Amateur.

[From the *Philadelphia Press*.]

Many people know of Edwin Booth's first appearance on the stage at the Boston Museum as *Tressel* in *Richard III.*, but few know anything of his career as an amateur for several years prior to that time.

In 1846 he organized a theatrical company of his friends and relations. Though only 13 years of age, and by no means the oldest, his was the spirit that carried the organization through with success. Among the members of this group that afterward became widely known were Wilkes Booth, his brother, John S. Clark and Somer Fieldbarrow.

Their theater was the cellar of a residence on Exeter street below Fayette street in Baltimore, Md. At one end of the cellar was the stage, raised 3 feet from the floor, and at the other was the main entrance, which was the large cellar window, reached by a ladder. The place was light and airy; the floor was strewn with sawdust and abundantly provided with benches.

The fact that the stairway to the cellar was used by the young thespians as their entrance to the "green room," made the main entrance much less pretentious than it might otherwise have been.

Both the brothers, Edwin and Wilkes, were enthusiastic in their play acting, and did not confine themselves to tragedy, though Edwin was never more pleased than when in full regalia he could take the character of *Jack Cade*. Fieldbarrow was the great song and dance man, and Clark was the funny man when they gave negro minstrel shows. Even Booth had no objection to blackening his face with burnt cork and joining in with the chorus. Benefits were occasionally given for the various members.

Booth continued these amateur performances until the early part of 1849, at which time he began to study seriously for the stage.

EDWIN BOOTH'S FATHER.

Remarkable Facts About the First Wife of Junius Brutus Booth.

Wedded in London and Buried in Baltimore—Supported for Twenty Years After Her Desertion.

The Story Unearthed in a Baltimore Graveyard—A Greater Romance in the Tragedian's Life Than He Ever Enacted on the Stage.

Some nine years ago, while walking along Eden street, far beyond the business centers of the City of Baltimore, I came upon an old Catholic graveyard. It was such a quaint old "God's acre" that my curiosity was excited and I wandered in through the open gate. There was such an air of peace and rest that I spent an hour and more in looking over the crumbling monuments and reading the strange inscriptions thereon. In a far corner of this curious old cemetery I came upon a half suken grave with a tombstone, brown with age, half fallen over. Upon it was this strange inscription:

JESUS—MARY—JOSEPH
PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF
MARY CHRISTINE ADELAIDE
DELANNOY,
WIFE OF
JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH, TRAGEDIAN.
SHE DIED IN BALTIMORE,
MARCH THE 9TH, 1858,
AGED 66 YEARS.

IT IS A HOLY AND WHOLESOOME THOUGHT
TO PRAY FOR THE DEAD.
MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.

The words, "Wife of Junius Brutus Booth, Tragedian," were the largest on the decaying marble, entirely out of proportion to the rest of the inscription. I knew not what it meant, and went and hunted up the old sexton.

brothers and sisters. Your affectionate daughter,
MARIE BOOTH.
I am as well as I can be, and I am getting as
fat as a great beast.

COPY OF CERTIFICATE.

Page 203.

Marriages solemnized in the Parish of St. George, Bloomsbury, in the year 1815.
Junius Brutus Booth of this parish — and Marie Christine Adelaide Delannoy of this parish were married in this church by banns — this eighth day of May in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifteen.

By one Nathaniel Forth, B. A., Curate.
This marriage was solemnized between us, { J. B. Booth,
{ M. C. A. Delannoy.
In the presence of } Thomas Blyth,
{ John Harrison.

No. 608.

This is a true copy of the Register.

Witness my hand this 8th day of May, 1815.

NATHANIEL FORTH, B. A., Curate.

I hope you are well satisfied with our marriage. Minnie has the certificate, and that is why we send you a written copy. It would cost 12 francs for another duplicate one. Tell Mr. Williams to write to me. I have no more room. I embrace you and all the family. I am, your affectionate son

J. B. BOOTH.

P. S.—Remember me to my uncle.
Addressed to Mme. Delannoy, No. 1150, Seet. 5,
Rue des Fripiers, Brussels.

II.—Life in England.

BOOTH'S EARLY THEATRICAL STRUGGLES AND HAPPY DOMESTIC LIFE.

It was fortunate for the young couple that Mr. Booth's enforced idleness did not last long, and his young wife was soon taken from the store, and he tells his mother-in-law so over his own signature, and also of his contract with the Covent Garden Theater. Here is the letter:

Addressed to Mme. Delannoy, No. 1159,
Sect. 5, Rue des Fripiers, a Bruxelles:
4 QUEEN STREET, BLOOMSBURY, 30th May,
1815.—MADAM AND FRIEND: I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 15th inst., and I am charmed, as also my wife, to hear that you are well. My engagement at Covent Garden was signed on the 4th of this month. How are the terms? For the first year, 40 francs a week; the second, 50; the third, 60; the fourth, 70; the fifth, 80. Thus you will see that the terms have been changed, and instead of 60 francs per week and for three years, my engagement is for five years, with an increase of 10 francs per week each year after September.

We have told you that my Minnie was placed in a magasin during my vacation, but I have had the happiness to obtain an engage-

cause you to hate the profession you are in—
is it neglect, injustice—do you feel more
poignantly than others in the same situation
do? Above all, what is the grand aim you had
in that, and what it will be in that you have
decided on, or are meditating to decide on?
Is it an ambition to be distinguished? At
present I can not but feel sorry; perhaps with
over truth I should say grieved at the bent of
your inclination, nor can I do less when
never creature was more ardent for fame than
I am for yours, nor felt more assured than I
have done at being in the right road, for
genius pointed out the path I thought, and
opportunity was at least partially afforded to
display those talents which not myself alone,
but every one whose judgment or feeling I
can prize, discerns and values equally with
myself.

I thought, though all we desired had not yet been attained, there was enough to cheer and enliven the way toward it. I feel that in the army you will have nothing to encourage you on but your own consciousness that a time shall come when you will be known—or do you really prefer the simple military life? Oh! how little do you know of yourself if you think you do. However, dear, only make yourself sure that you do prefer it to the one you are in, and I shall be content. What I most prefer is that feeling unhappy in one place we fancy any change must be for the better.

Were these the times of a Bonaparte, and you could yourself address him, there might be fame and honor fast as such an impatient spirit could desire, and feeling that I could at least be silent. Now, I can neither be that nor yet can say half what I feel. Write to me directly.

III.—The First Separation.

DISSATISFIED WITH ENGLAND, BOOTH SEEKS HIS FORTUNE IN AMERICA.

While he relinquished his ambitions for a military career and went on with his work, he was constantly dissatisfied, but on January 21, 1819, a boy was born to him whom he named Richard Junius. His father, who was living with him at the time, or they with him, doubtless influenced the choice of the name. This child was a great comfort to him, and the domestic river of life kept on running smoothly, as it had ever done since the marriage. But the year following his birth troubles and controversies with the managers kept on multiplying, and Mr. Booth, becoming disgusted with the business demands of life, concluded to try his fortunes in the new world.

The boy being too young for the voyage the

ing and vexatious time his sister, notwithstanding her assistance. We know how she has fared in America. In one Junius here is what her and all her troupe idea. She has also a father."

During the stay of Richard he would come in the month of May, years he has kept us uncertain once in England coming to see his son ferently I would not England with Richard.

I waited for the confidence, when being a letter by which he a two days he would say his son not to worry come to see us accord that he had lost so the folly to come to not spare the expenses "but," said he, "I passed I shall come the success of Richard not to have been in was there. I have been too much credulity. epistle begins to fati that I am far from having to know; so, my dear patience.

HER FIRST
I have received no letter the last one dated May what to attribute this habit of writing us three

I have no cause to complain than what he had agreed. Our correspondence has nothing of the greatest can be we can not imagine him in the papers. times. I hope soon to person in Philadelphia intimately, and to whom formation.

Booth wrote me while Henson had returned to Mentor; I doubt if this complain of against him.

I am so feeble that I let Richard write under You are waiting, de my dear Richard.

EDWIN BOOTH A SICK MAN

PROBABILITY THAT HE WILL NEVER ACT AGAIN.

Troubled With Vertigo and Very Feeble—Living a Life of Rest and Quiet—
His Daughter's Loving Attentions.

1892

The most striking figure among the two hundred and more guests at the Laurel House, in Lakewood, is that of a feeble, tottering old man with a pale and wonderfully sad face, who makes his way feebly through the corridors with the assistance of a heavy oaken cane. You would hardly know that it was Edwin Booth unless he raised those surprisingly lustrous and melancholy eyes which for so many years have been familiar to everybody who knows anything or cares anything about theatrical matters. The eyes remain unchanged save for a pained and

worried expression which has come into them of late, and which intensifies their naturally sad look, says the *New York World*.

But everything else about the great actor has changed, and changed most unhappily. The appearance of great age is the most striking of all the alterations that have come in Mr. Booth's appearance. In years he is by no means an old man. If he lives until the 13th of next month he will be only 59 years old. He was born November 13, 1833—the night of the historical shower of stars, when the heavens were filled with myriads of flying meteors and superstitious people thought it was the forerunner of the day of judgment, and that the end of the world was at hand. But other things than years will make an old man, and among them is years of such intense and nerve-exhausting work as Mr. Booth has put into his art. The collapse came as it inevitably must. As Mr. Grossman, his son-in-law, said yesterday, he had overdrawn his account so far as his nerves and strength went, and the result was that he was brought up with a sharp turn. It is not within the wildest possibility that he will ever appear on the stage again.

"I suppose," said Mr. Grossman, "that were he to get well he would want to go back to the theater, but he never speaks of it, or, I believe, thinks of it. He does not think of anything any more than he can help. Even the telegrams and cable messages which come to him when some paragraph appears in the papers concerning his ill-health—even these worry him, for he attends to them all himself, and they make him work. What he wants is rest—absolute quiet and rest."

Mr. Booth tottered to the door of the smoking-room of the hotel while Mr. Grossman was speaking. He had just sat down and was about to light a cigar when his daughter, Mrs. Grossman, appeared at the door and Mr. Booth struggled to his feet and, with weak, unsteady steps, advanced to meet her. She wanted him to go driving, but he bent over and kissed her and said:

"No, I had a bad night. I do not want to be moving to-day. I will be quiet and remain here."

It is only a few days since he had so severe an attack of vertigo that he fell heavily

in his room and bruised his forehead. It was in the morning shortly after he got out of bed, a time when the vertigo is most apt to seize him, and although his daughter was with him in the room she was unable to reach him in time to prevent his fall. These attacks, however, have become less frequent of late, and this is regarded as a favorable symptom, due to the quiet and rest she has had in Lakewood. He has no physician in attendance upon him, and will not be bothered with a personal attendant, though during the time his attacks of vertigo were frequent he was in danger of falling and injuring himself. But he prefers to go his own way and look out for himself just as other guests of the house do. He gets up about 9 or 9:30 o'clock and takes his breakfast about 10. Sometimes he has breakfast in his room and sometimes he goes to the dining-room, but his dinner he always takes in the dining-room unless it happens that he is feeling uncommonly weak. His great weakness is in his legs. They are so unsteady and feeble as he walks that it seems as though the merest touch would overthrow him. He makes an obvious effort to carry his head erect, but it has a weak list to one side, which together with his unsteadiness on his feet, is strongly suggestive of the stroke of paralysis which Lawrence Barrett had to announce to a Rochester audience had come upon him.



Edwin Booth.



Mr. Booth and His Daughter.

EDWIN BOOTH A SICK MAN

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Mr. Booth and His Daughter.

The Passing of Booth.

The impending death of Edwin Booth casts a deep shadow over the American stage, and in a sense tends to eclipse the gayety of nations. He is practically the last of our really great actors, the men of acknowledged and triumphant dramatic genius. There is nobody living to compare with him in force and skill, and nobody visible who can be expected to take his place. His personality is identified with certain parts in such a way as to make them his own. There has been no other Hamlet and no other Iago for many years. Those who have pretended to compete with him have only tried to imitate him, with no better effect than that of presenting a marked contrast and emphasizing his remarkable superiority. He held a place in the public estimation that put rivalry out of the question. The critics could pick no flaws in his work. He did not act characters so much as he lived them, and thus his performances satisfied all the demands of art, while escaping every suggestion of artificiality. The secret of his power was beyond analysis. He could not have explained it himself further than to say that fiction was for the time a reality to him, and an inspiration. We can recall special touches of beauty in his methods, but we can not define the complete and extraordinary effect of the interpretation. His successes were won systematically, but the logic of them was imperceptible, nevertheless, and we only know that they left no room for anything but delight and applause. *G-D*

When such a man takes his departure the characters associated with his fame disappear and await revival at some indefinite future date. We remember him as the supreme representative of given parts until a successor comes to repeat his work and provide a new example of dramatic greatness. These interregnums have ensued periodically throughout the whole history of the stage. The death of every eminent actor has been succeeded by a period in which his favorite characters were comparatively lost to the world. It was so with Garrick, with Kean, with Macready, and so on through the entire list of theatrical notabilities. There has been no fully adequate successor to Forrest, though twenty years have passed since he died. Juliet went away with Adelaide Neilson, and has not yet returned. We have had no satisfactory Lady Macbeth or Meg Merrilies since Charlotte Cushman. John McCullough made so much of Virginius that nobody has been able to make it acceptable after him. There is no Cassius to put aside the recollection of Barrett. And so it will be in Booth's case, with peculiar significance, since it is true of him in a more pronounced degree than of any of his contemporaries that he stood for certain characters as if he and they were inseparable. The time will come, we may believe, when his victories will be duplicated by somebody else of equal or surpassing genius; but the signs are not propitious for an early realization of such a fact. Many years of watching and waiting are likely to pass before the world shall look upon his like again, which is only to say that his service will long survive him in the form of a memory that implies a gap in dramatic annals. *4-23. 1893*

It is the fate of a great actor to live only thus after his work is done. He leaves no permanent record behind him like the great author, soldier or statesman. His genius is manifested under conditions of a

transient nature and in a way that forbids the thought of the kind of fame that helps to make history splendid. He is dependent upon the commendation of the moment for his reward, and when the final curtain falls there is nothing remaining of him but the lingering echo of his voice in the ears of a public that is itself soon replaced by another to which he is known merely as an indefinite tradition, if he is known at all. His only consolation lies in the fact that his place may not be immediately supplied. That is the true test of his greatness. His only monument, to put it paradoxically, is a vacuum. He is remembered to the extent that he has been able to so identify himself with a character as to deprive it of interest when he has ceased to play it. The men who do that are the ones who reach the highest dramatic distinction; and even they are gradually and surely forgotten. You can count the number of them in any period on the fingers of one hand. They are the exceptions that prove the general rule of evanescence in the matter of public credit won behind the footlights. The stage does not offer any inducements to the seeker of substantial reputation. It exacts unremitting industry and undivided devotion, and in the ultimate reckoning it pays for them mainly with faded bouquets and soiled clippings from newspapers. The glory of it is a part of its essential mimicry. It pertains entirely to the present, in short; and the best of its servants can not hope for more after they are gone than the tribute of a temporary emptiness in the places that they have filled.

EDWIN BOOTH DYING.

Dr. Smith Says There Is Now Very Little Hope of Even Partial Recovery.
NEW YORK, June 4.—Edwin Booth is worse. This evening the following bulletin was posted at the Player's Club:

"In regard to Mr. Booth's condition, it may be stated that he is gradually growing weaker, and that there is now very little hope of even a partial recovery.

"DR. SINCLAIR SMITH."

Dr. Smith left the club at 6 o'clock and returned soon after 11 o'clock. At 11:30 a bulletin was posted to the effect that no change in Mr. Booth's condition was noted. No information was vouchsafed at the club when inquiries were made late to-night other than that Dr. Smith was still with Mr. Booth and would remain all night. *1893*

Mr. Booth may die at any moment.

EDWIN BOOTH, 1853

Written for The Republic by Margaret Spencer.

At one of Mrs. General Lander's "small teas," famous in Washington for the brilliant story-tellers that gather there, the hostess related some personal reminiscences of Edwin Booth in his young days.

Mrs. Lander was Miss Jean Davenport, the actress, before she married.

The talk had been on some educational topic—the overtaxing of the young mind with study out of school, perhaps—and Mrs. Lander said: "I believe in work and play going together. It makes boys and girls cheerful and smart and interesting all through life. I never knew a really brilliant artist of any kind who could do good work without simple, healthful, playful recreation right along with the drudgery."

And then she told a little California story in illustration of what she had said: "When I was playing Camille in San Francisco the 'leading man' of the stock company was only a boy, less than 21.

"I was very much annoyed, and dreaded to play with him, because he was so inexperienced. I felt it would be impossible to do myself justice, but it could not be helped. However, he proved bright and eager to learn, was full of keen interest in his part, and anxious to be shown the way pleasing to me. At the rehearsal he asked: 'Miss Davenport, how shall I kneel in the death scene?'

"I replied: 'Be sure and kneel before me so that I can look down on you.'

"The evening came. The opera house was packed. My boy, to the astonishment of all, played with the very soul of genius in him. He fairly trembled with emotion. He forgot all my careful directions and took his part with the self-forgetfulness and abandon of an old actor, whose intuitive knowledge of his 'part' is sufficient to him. I came near forgetting myself in the admiration I felt for my lover, my boy lover.

"The death scene came and Armand was missing. I looked hastily behind me and there, instead of kneeling at my feet, with his head before me, he had bowed himself in anguish on the back of my low couch. There was no time to move, to speak, nor change a word or position. I simply turned so that I could look at him. His stricken attitude was pitiful. Never had I seen grief so naturally portrayed. I was carried out of myself. I stretched my arms toward his bowed, boyish head, and the house rose to their feet with a murmur of applause. He lifted his face to mine, and I moaned aloud from real pity and pain at the boy's anguish. And that boy was Edwin Booth. And that was his way of working. He created his part wondrously as he played even then, as he has played since.

"The next week we played a new piece and had to rehearse a good deal. Edwin was very fond of the sea and of long walks



Edwin Booth at 23 (from a photograph in the collection of Mr. Everet Jansen Wendell).

out of study hours. One day he was late and we were troubled about him, for he always had been on time for rehearsals. A boy was dispatched to find him. I was out of patience and tired, and finally had sent for my carriage to go home when I met at the door the handsome boy. Cap in hand, his great dark eyes flashing with excitement, he rushed up to me and said eagerly, 'Oh, Miss Davenport! See what I've brought you! I could not reach here on time! They were very hard to get.'

"He handed me the much soiled cap with two sea gull's eggs in it—'And here's another!' he cried, and out came a beauty from his trousers pocket. 'Oh it's such fun to hunt nests on the Pacific Coast. I do wish, Miss Davenport, you could have been along,' he added—and what could I say? I could only share the enthusiasm of the wideawake boy and thank him for remembering me. We went back into the theater and rehearsed for an hour. He played his part just as perfectly as he had hunted eggs.

"I was never so sorry to leave a company in my life. The touch of a genius had inspired us all to good work—and the genius not quite 21."

BOOTH IS DEAD.

The Great Actor Called to His Final Rest.

The Curtain Fell Early This Morning at New York.

Culmination of a Hard-Fought Battle With Disease.

A Long and Illustrious Career Brought to a Close.

The Last of a Family of Famous Tragedians.

Interesting Incidents of His Life On and Off the Stage—The Players' Club, Where He Passed Away.

THE REPUBLIC BUREAU,
ROOM 146 TIMES BUILDING,
NEW YORK, June 7, 1893, 2 a.m.

Edwin Booth died at 1:17½ o'clock this morning at the Players' Club. Death was painless. Mr. Booth's daughter, Mrs. Edwin Booth Grossman, her husband, Mr. Grossman, his brother-in-law, J. H. McGonagle and Mr. Charles Farryll and Dr. St. Clair Smith were gathered about his bedside when the end came.

There were no last words. There was not even a farewell look. There was only a cessation of breathing by the

man whose Mr. Booth had occupied since the Players' Club was founded by him and waved a handkerchief, a signal which all in the street instantly understood.

Then, where all had been comparatively silent a short time before, bustle ensued. The attaches of the club had been instructed beforehand what to do, and they did it. Friends of the family and the dead actor were called up on the telephone and notified and telegrams were sent to distant points. Within half an hour every club in New York knew of the great tragedian's death, and in almost the same space of time the sad news had reached the lobbies of the leading hotels. Five minutes after Mr. Booth died Dr. Smith and Mr. McGonagle came downstairs. The physician said:

"Mr. Booth's death was absolutely painless. All that a human being could do to relieve him had been done, but during the evening we all recognized that he was beyond human aid. He simply fell into a profound sleep, and from that instant it was only a question of moments until the flickering life flame would spend itself. Early in the evening Mr. Booth's pulse was 160 and his temperature was 105. At that time his extremities were cold, and it was then that I was satisfied that the end was close at hand."

No positive statement as to the funeral arrangements could be had to-night, but it is generally believed that the funeral will be of a public character.

It was on April 19 that Mr. Booth was stricken with the illness which caused his death. He was at the Players' Club at the time and Dr. St. Clair Smith and two other physicians were called in. They decided that he was suffering from hemiplegia. Then followed paralysis of the tongue. General paralysis slowly ensued and with it an acute kidney trouble.

After a time he seemed to recover and preparations were being made to remove him to Narragansett Pier, when he had a relapse a week ago last Saturday. He rallied from this, but last Saturday he had another relapse. It was of such a serious nature that in his weakened condition he could not combat it, and though his vitality was considered most wonderful he slowly succumbed to the progress of the disease.

FAMILY HISTORY.

Facts About Edwin Booth's Life and Parentage.

Junius Brutus Booth came to America in 1821, discouraged with the treatment he received in the English theater. There is no doubt that this Booth was a great actor, greater in many parts than his rival, Edmund Kean. But the British public had, after years of neglect, made Kean its idol, and there was no room for Booth. His genius closely resembled Kean's; they took very nearly the same point of view. Booth, like Kean, could depict blazing passion and thrill the souls of his hearers with fiery eloquence. That, in his early manhood, told against him. There might have been room on the London stage, even when Kean's fame was at the zenith, for another John Kemble, cold, formal, correct, of formidable dignity, and irreproachable skill. Macready slowly worked his way to the front in those days of Kean's ascendancy. But no place in the public heart could be found for another Kean while Kean lived.

Junius Brutus Booth had some of the faults of Edmund Kean, as well as similar artistic gifts. He was, in his later years, eccentric almost to the verge of insanity. He was given to fits of melancholy. He played fast and loose with the public. He was intemperate. But his nature was of a finer fiber than Kean's; he

was a purer and a wiser man. He had a larger actual knowledge of his own art and kindred arts than Kean had. He was affectionate, as Kean was not. As for his acting, it is conceded to-day that it equaled Kean's, and they, with Edwin Forrest, were the last positively great tragic actors of the English-speaking stage. Some of their successors have been relatively great—great in their own epochs in comparison with their rivals. They have been scholarly, careful, industrious. Some of them have possessed exquisitely fine perceptive faculties. They have, on the whole, benefited the stage more than Kean or the elder Booth. But they have all lacked the essential quality of a great actor—the fire of genius. They have been fine actors, thoughtful, eloquent, picturesque actors, but not great ones. And of them all, none—not Macready, not Phelps, not Charles Kean, or Henry Irving—has had a more honorable career, or set a better example in the pursuit of his calling, than Edwin Booth.

Junius Brutus Booth's second wife, who came to America with him, had been Mary Ann Holmes of Reading, England. They had ten children; namely, Junius Brutus, Rosalie Anne, Henry Byron, Mary, Frederick, Elizabeth, Edwin, Thomas, Asia, Sydney, John Wilkes, and Joseph Addison. Of these the younger Junius Brutus became an actor, managed theaters in California and in the East, and finally kept a popular summer hotel in Massachusetts; Asia married John Sleeper Clarke, the comic actor; John Wilkes took to the stage, but, because of his profligacy and lack of balance, such gifts as he had were wasted; Joseph Addison was a reputable commonplace gentleman. The elder Booth bought a farm near the old town of Belair, 25 miles from Baltimore, in Harford County, Maryland, and there Edwin was born, November 13, 1833. The farmhouse was little more than a log cabin, built in the woods. The family lived sometimes, when the elder Booth did not feel in the mood for farming, at 60 North Exeter street, in Baltimore. In his boyhood Edwin was an amateur actor and organized a Thespian Society, of which John Sleeper Clarke was a member. Clarke's ambition was to shine in tragedy, while Edwin had a fine taste for comedy. Edwin's theatrical hopes, however, were discouraged by his father.

He was, almost from his infancy, his father's favorite. He had comparatively little schooling, because from his early youth it was the whim of the eccentric tragedian to have Edwin with him. The boy frequently accompanied his father on long professional journeys, and had more influence over him in his sullen and excitable moods than any other person. He served as valet and dresser for the great Richard and Sir Giles. He waited for him at the wings while the elder Booth, amid tempestuous applause, spoke the magic words of Shakespeare. He gave him his sword when he went on to fight Richmond or Macduff. So that Edwin was on the stage at the very beginning. His mind was formed behind the theater scenes. The slender, sallow-faced little youngster's big black eyes saw all that there was to see of the actor in the practice of his art, night after night. Yet, while he persistently kept Edwin by his side and carried him by boat and stage coach from town to town, from theater to theater, the father did not want his favorite son to be an actor. He never dreamed that little Edwin, in whom he saw no faint traces of talent, would be for many years the foremost actor of a nation of 60,000,000, and, more than that, in his time the wisest and most eloquent interpreter of Shakespeare on the English-speaking stage.

Edwin Booth made his first appearance on the stage September 10, 1849, at the Boston Museum, in the insignificant part of Tressel in "Richard III." There is a tale, which has been widely published, that the obscure actor who was cast for that part wanted to get a holiday and unconsciously opened the



Edwin Booth.

sleeper, a sob from the watching daughter and—silence. Mr. Booth's life had gone out. He died in Mrs. Grossman's arms.

It had been announced early in the evening that the great actor could not survive the night and a crowd collected before the door of the Players' Club to hear the latest news. Among those recognized was Minnie Palmer, the soubrette, and a party of her friends. At midnight Mr. Booth sank into a most profound sleep.

The nurse in attendance warned the family then that the sick man could not last much longer, and when Dr. Smith came into the room he confirmed the attendant's view. It was just 17 minutes and 30 seconds after 1 o'clock this morning, when

young, who was not yet 16 years old, to don his "shape," his boots and spurs, and "go on" as Tressel. It has been told, also, how the elder Booth, when he saw Edwin thus accoutered in the greenroom, scowled and muttered his disapproval, but it was too late to change then, because the other Tressel had disappeared.

The boy "went on" and acted his part so well that he was given a prominent place in the Booth company. A few weeks later, in Providence, he appeared as Cassio to his father's Othello. Imagine a 16-year-old Cassio calling wine a demon and lamenting his drunkenness! He also played Wilfred in "The Iron Chest" and made a good impression, both in Providence and at the Arch Street Theater in Philadelphia. Two years later, or in 1851, young Booth, then not quite 18 years old, actually played Richerd III. taking his father's place, at the old National Theater in New York. The elder Booth announced that he was too ill to appear and sent his son on at the eleventh hour in his stead. It was not until the second act was well under way that the audience discovered that the deformed King was the younger Booth. He was called before the curtain several times. It is said that the erratic genius pretended to be ill for the purpose of putting his son's talent to a practical test.

Edwin Booth and his father went to California in June, 1852. Julius Brutus Booth, Jr., was for a short time manager of the American Theater in Sacramento. There the elder Booth and Edwin appeared August 19, 1852, in "The Iron Chest," and afterward in other plays. Edwin remained on the Pacific Coast after the departure for the East of his father, who died suddenly that year, November 30, while journeying from New Orleans to Cincinnati. The American Theater was destroyed by fire, but Edwin secured an engagement in San Francisco. He also made a trip across the Pacific to the Sandwich Islands and Australia in company with Laura Keene, D. C. Anderson and other actors. In San Francisco and Sacramento he played all sorts of parts, from Dandy Cox, in the negro farce produced by the Chapman family, to Hamlet. He supported "stars" of every degree, from his great father to Catherine Sinclair, and one Clapp, a stage-struck dancing master, to whose lamentable Hamlet Edwin played the Ghost at the Forrest Theater in Sacramento, while the audience hooted.

AS AN ACTOR.

Mr. Booth's Dramatic Record, With a Critical Analysis.

Booth appeared in leading parts in a number of plays in San Francisco, and met with success in them all. He gained great popularity as Raphael in "The Marble Heart" and played the part many times. He was hailed as the rising star, upon whose shoulders the mantle of the elder Booth had fallen. General Sherman, who was then a Lieutenant, told in an after-dinner speech, nearly 35 years later at Delmonico's in New York, as he stood beside the chair of Mr. Booth, how, when he could not afford to go to the theater, he used to sit at night on the veranda of his hotel across the way and listen to the thunders of applause that greeted the young tragedian. Before he left for the East Booth added to his repertory the characters of Macbeth, Petruchio, and others since associated with his fame. When he returned to California, after an absence of 21 years, in the autumn of 1878, he received the tribute due to a conqueror. The theaters were jammed when he played, enormous premiums were paid for tickets, and public enthusiasm was unrestrained.

Booth had been busy these 21 years. When

BOOTH IS DEAD.

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he first returned to the East he assumed successively and successfully the roles of Sir Giles Overreach in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," Richerd III., Claude Meinotte, King Lear, Hamlet and Lucius Junius Brutus in Payne's "The Wife." Lawrence Barrett became a member of his company about this time.

When he appeared at the Winter Garden Theater in New York Forrest was filling an engagement at Niblo's, then the favorite theater with peripatetic stars and this increased the public interest in the younger actor's performances.

His Hamlet began to be spoken of seriously. The newspapers took him up and gave attention to his arrangement of the text and stage "business." The advisability of the restoration of the episode in the King's closet, which he had made, was discussed by the critics. Sharp attacks on the artistic faults of Forrest, whose acting had certain defects that even dull-witted person could recognize, although he was a man of might and genius, appeared in some prints. Deficiencies in Booth's portrayal of the Prince of Denmark were noted by most of the reviewers, but both the drift of criticism and the popular applause indicated that his Hamlet was already preferred to all other Hamlets. In that engagement he also appeared as Pescara, Richard III., Richelle, Romeo, and Othello. His success was so great that the engagement was prolonged, and he was seen as Iago to the Othello of J. W. Wallack, Jr., as Shylock, and Brutus.

Mr. Booth went to England for the first time in 1861 and acted in London and other cities. He was married that year to Mary Devlin, who had been an actress. She died at Dorchester, Mass., February 21, 1863, when she was not yet 23 years old, leaving an infant daughter, Edwin.

From 1862 to 1864 Booth played in the East, appearing in all the principal characters of his repertory. Rose Eytine and Lawrence Barrett were the chief members of his company. He played Hamlet 100 nights at the Winter Garden Theater, and on March 24, 1865, transferred it to the Boston Theater, of which he and his brother-in-law, John Sleeper Clarke, were the lessees.

Three weeks later the country received the dreadful shock caused by the assassination of President Lincoln by Edwin Booth's younger brother. The house in Baltimore of John Sleeper Clarke, who was known to sympathize with the Confederates, was attacked by a furious mob. Edwin suffered no indignity, but the shame of the family disgrace burdened his mind. He never afterward appeared in Washington.

Booth was playing at the Winter Garden Theater in New York the following year when it burned down, leaving him without a permanent abiding place in the metropolis. He had reached the zenith of his fame then and he conceived the idea of erecting a magnificent playhouse to bear his name. He invested the bulk of his fortune in the enterprise, and, on February 3, 1869, "Booth's Theater" was thrown open to the public with "Romeo and Juliet" as the attraction. Mr. Booth's Juliet was Miss Mary McVicker and she also played Desdemona to his Moor in "Othello." Miss McVicker was a stepdaughter of J. H. McVicker and had graduated from McVicker's Thoater in Chicago. She and Mr. Booth were married June 2, 1869, at Long Branch, the bride's grandfather, the Rev. B. F. Myers of California, performing the ceremony. She then retired from the stage. Her physical force and artistic powers were hardly equal to the demands of the two important roles intrusted to her at Booth's Theatre, but romance is dear to the multitude. She was a favorite.

In 1871, Mr. Booth having met with financial reverses, his theater was sold under the hammer, his creditors buying it in at about one-third its actual value. The house passed through many vicissitudes. Boucicault had an advisory voice in the management for some time. Clara Morris tried to act La Mactbeth there and failed. Charlotte Cushman there made her last appearance in New York, and Adelaide Neilson, who had there made her first appearance in this country in 1872, filled several memorable engagements. Italian opera, French opera bouffe, English musical farce, and comic pantomime were admitted to the stage. Barry Sullivan did Richard and other parts after his own fashion there, and Sarah Bernhardt there made her American debut. The ill-fated theater, the noblest home the poor drama ever had in New York, was sold in 1883 to the notorious James D. Fish and Ferdinand Ward, who altered and rebuilt it for mercantile purposes.

Mr. Booth went to Europe for the second time in 1882, appearing in London, Dublin and the larger cities of the provinces; also in Berlin, where he was hailed with enthusiasm. His Richelle, his Lear and his Richard III. were especially liked. Irving had confessedly failed in Richelle, and no other performances of Lear and Richard of York were well remembered. The surpassing merit of his Iago was conceded, while his portrayal of Hamlet was likened to that of Charles Kemble.

In 1886 Lawrence Barrett assumed the management of Booth's toure and retained it until 1888, when Booth and Modjeska joined forces. This artistic partnership was not satisfactory and in 1890 Mr. Booth rejoined Lawrence Barrett. The sudden death of Barrett, March 29, 1891, caused an early close of the season on April 4, 1891. Booth played what proved to be his last performance at the Academy of Music in Brooklyn. His acting was feeble, but the play—"Hamlet"—was followed with great interest and at its conclusion he was cheered to the echo.

THE ACTING OF EDWIN BOOTH.

The acting of Edwin Booth can be most satisfactorily considered if viewed in its relation to the man's personal peculiarities and temperament. No result of his labors lives after him, except in the memory. He played no new characters, he never produced a new play, he did nothing whatever to encourage dramatic poets. Broadly speaking, his art was a beautiful composite of the best in the work of his predecessors. But his crystalline eloquence was his own. No actor has spoken the words of Shakespeare more correctly or more elegantly than he spoke them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO.

Mr. Booth's acting was free from "mannerisms" and outre peculiarities. He was always a model of grace and manly beauty. His intonation was pure and correct. He could not be successfully travestied. George L. Fox, one of the popular comic actors of his better years, used to "make up" to look something like a caricature of Mr. Booth's Hamlet and Richelleau, but he never found any oddities in the original to exaggerate for the purpose of making laughter.

A good actor must possess a recognizable symbol for every passion and emotion and every shade of feeling, and never misplace a symbol; he must understand his physical self perfectly, control every muscle, and know exactly the effect produced by every gesture, every pose, every tone of his voice, and every change of feature; he must have, in short, perfect command of himself and put all his resources to harmonious use. Such an actor was Edwin Booth, whose physical equipment comprised a face of uncommon comeliness, a voice of ample range, great beauty of tone, and rare flexibility, and a lithe, graceful figure. He had a profound knowledge of the stage and ability to select and choose with exquisite taste. His powers of appreciation surpassed his powers of expression. When envious detractors used to say of him glibly that he acted rather from the traditions of the stage than from any ideal of his own, they missed the exact truth, and their shafts fell short of the mark. Edwin Booth had exalted ideas of his own. The intellectual actor, who reasons about his work, has stronger ideals than the one whose heat powers are intuitive, whose genius is his only guide, and who creates striking effects by processes that defy analysis. Edwin Booth could not always realize his ideals. He understood himself, his strength and its limitations, better than his enthusiastic admirers understood him. In this he resembled Macready, but Macready's was the stronger nature.

Many persons have declared that Booth's acting was seen at its best in such parts as Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Edward Mortimer and Bertuccio; many others have considered his flawless Iago the impersonation in which his art was best exhibited. But Edward L. Davenport's Sir Giles was often as movable

and forcible as Booth's, while, as an interpreter of the poets, particularly of Shakespeare, Davenport was no rival of Booth. Both Davenport and Edwin Adams might, however, have reached his eminence if they had studied and labored as faithfully as he did; but they were "good fellowes," genial, generous, sunny-hearted and careless, who loved humanity and the good things of life more than they loved their art. They frittered away their powers, while every artistic power that Edwin Booth possessed was carefully fostered and nurtured and turned to the best account.

Booth used his voice as a Joachim uses his violin; he knew it thoroughly, and he played upon it with exquisite art. To see him act was not "like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning," but the thoughts of the great poet were illuminated with a steady if not dazzling light, and all the melody that belongs to his verse was preserved. As an artist Edwin Booth had no eccentricities. His "readings" were always the most rational. He was a tragedian, and the last of the tragedians. It is not likely that the old style of tragedy will ever be revived. The new race of actors will be impersonators first of all; the tendency of the modern stage is toward the elevation of the "character actor"; Edwin Booth and his predecessors were, beyond everything else, interpreters of poets.

Edwin Booth's Hamlet was a clear, logical, refined, and harmonious exposition of that type of human genius at war with itself and the world. It was not original. Some of his "business" was as old as Botterton, and he adhered to all that his predecessors had used that his fine taste could justify. It was not electrifying and romantic, like Fechter's uneven but telling portrayal; it did not have the stamp of modern thought or the sympathy with modern art that Irving's odd but fascinating Hamlet has. He might have been more nearly perfect in Iago, but the truth is that he was greater than Iago, which is not a great character. His Othello was fine, thoughtful, true to a high ideal, and pictorially beautiful, but it was never appreciated, because the memory of Forrest's mighty Othello lived when Booth's was to be seen at its best, and in later years the torrent of passion of Salvini's Moor quite overwhelmed the effect of Booth's carefully finished picture. The same might be said of his Lear, which was liked so well in England, except that the common mind could grasp the fact that Booth's Lear was truer to Shakespeare than Salvini's gesticulating Sotethron. His Macbeth was not notable except in the one memorable scene where he gave expression to the King's realization of the vanity of ambition and the emptiness of his ill-gotten glory. The same note which dominated in his Richard II. made his impersonation of that ill-used King one of his best works.

Edwin Booth's beginning was lucky. The praise he received on the Pacific Slope gave him courage. The California gaudrons might have been bestowed on a much less competent actor. The people were hungry for a hero. In the East his progress was slow, until he was taken up by a band of admirers and pushed into fame. The public applause followed. His youth, his handsome, mournful face, his poetical aspect, helped greatly. His triumph was largely personal, but not the less secure. He worked hard, but in the end, it may be inferred, he realized that he had fallen short of his aspirations.

He had the Booth name, at once a great and honored name and an abhorred one. Although Edwin's mother was always recognized as his father's wife, yet another woman claimed that position, and Edwin's friends have thought that he was always very sensitive about his birth and exaggerated the family dishonor. He realized with bitterness that the infamy of his younger brother served to advertise him, and he hated the advertisement. His natural disposition was modest and retiring; he had a morbidly sensitive nature. His private life was clouded by calamity. The death of his first wife was a cruel blow, and he did not have a tranquil existence with his second wife, whose unreasonable jealousy was a mania, and who died demented. He became morose and gloomy. He could not bear affliction philosophically, and, moreover, he was constantly at war with the worse part of his nature. Yet he was regarded affectionately by all who knew him well. He was loved and respected by the people. History will speak well of him.

EDWIN BOOTH DEAD.

The Curtain Rung Down on America's Greatest Tragedian.

After Weeks of Suffering Death Came to His Relief at 1:15 This Morning—Little Life in Him for Two Days
—Biographical Sketch.

1853

Special Dispatch to the Globe-Democrat.

NEW YORK, June 7.—Edwin Booth, the tragedian, died at the Players' Club at 1:15 a. m. It was apparent yesterday morning that Mr. Booth had not many hours to live. At 9 o'clock yesterday morning Mr. Booth was unconscious. He lay on his back, one hand and arm crooked above his head and the other arm stretched stiff by his side. He had greatly wasted. His face was sunken, and there were wide purple-black rings beneath the eyes. He breathed at times in gasps, and again his breathing was so slight as to alarm his attendants. In this condition he remained to the end.



EDWIN BOOTH.

The death of Edwin Booth seems to mark the end of a dramatic era in America. The school of actors in which he was among the foremost has passed away, and it is often said that the places of the tragedians with whom the last generation were familiar must remain unfilled. But while their successors are not visible at this time, when the lighter forms of the drama are in favor, no fear need be felt that the classic tragedian is extinct or the plays of Shakespeare likely to suffer from lasting neglect. In the great sonnet addressed to Shakespeare by Milton occur the words, "Thy unvalued plays." Yet we know how in the course of time these plays have come to be valued more than any other writings outside of those of sacred import.

The career of Edwin Booth, though not quite rounded out to the accepted, and yet decidedly exceptional, limits of the years of man, may be regarded as complete, and this thought carries with it a feeling of satisfaction. His father died at 56, acting to the last. Edwin Booth was 59 November 18 last, but for several years has suffered from semi-paralysis, so that his active years upon the stage were about the same as his father's. His first regular appearance was at the Boston Museum, September 10, 1849, in the little part of *Tressil*, in *Richard III*. His desire to act was inborn, for his father opposed it, though making him a companion in his travels. At length this opposition gave way, and Edwin appeared with his father as Cassio in *Othello* and Wilford in *The Iron Chest*. At the National Theater, Chatham street, New York, he took the place of his father, who was ill, and for the first time in his life acted the part of *Richard*. The effort was remarkably successful.

From these first years Edwin Booth was virtually a star. By some intuitive process the playgoers of America accepted him as an actor of the highest promise, and this feeling was as general in pit and gallery as among the more learnedly critical. He was a handsome young man of rather poetic, yet manly appearance, with good stature and figure, and deep, serious eyes of remarkable expressiveness. He had from the outset his own conceptions of acting, and while he must have learned from his father much that was technical he was true always to his own ideas of right interpretation. The stage has had no actor of more uniform excellence, none who was more simple and sincere in being himself. He imitated no one in general or detail, subjecting every situation and every line to his own intellectual judgment. The occasional frenzy of his father was not reflected in his acting, yet he possessed greater power, speaking in the general sense, and reached a higher level in his art. He was a student and scholar on the stage, a scholar and gentleman in private life.

The roles in which Edwin Booth was prominent are known to millions of his countrymen, and to dwell upon them with particularity is needless. He was the ideal Hamlet of his time. His name and the play had but to be announced and the audience was assured. In *Richelieu* he probably never had an equal. He was a better Iago than *Othello*, a fact that adds possibly to his stature as an actor. As *Richard*, *Shylock*, *Macbeth* and *Sir Giles* the sinister elements of character seemed to rouse him to keener action and interest, much as they also roused Hawthorne to pursue them with like psychological intensity. He lifted the part of *Bertuccio* to new and somewhat peculiar importance. In refined comedy, as *Benedict* and *Don Cæsar*, he was an agreeable figure, and made of *Claude Melnotte* all of which the sentimental part is susceptible.

Edwin Booth had the most creditable and honorable ambition as a manager. From 1862 to 1867 he conducted the Winter Garden in New York. His Shakespearean revivals there were magnificent. He played Hamlet 100 consecutive nights at this theater, and repeated the achievement at the Walnut Street Theater, Philadelphia, also managed by Clarke and Booth. The theater he built in New York, christened after himself, was opened February 3, 1869. It is customary to speak of this venture as a failure, but Booth managed it five years, advancing the broad interests of the drama by rapid strides. In carrying forward this admirable purpose it happened that he sacrificed his fortune. This was the whole extent of the "failure," and history will take care that it is not misunderstood. Booth retrieved his money losses with ease by returning to his professional travels. He paid his debts, made another and ample fortune, and generously bestowed a portion of it upon the Players' Club in New York. His noble experiment at Booth's Theater cost him a million, but in the subsequent season of 1876-7 he earned over \$700,000, one engagement of eight weeks in San Francisco yielding \$96,000. Booth has been to America in management what Irving is to England, and the difference of financial results does not represent any difference in elevation of artistic aims. England was visited by Booth in 1880 and 1882, and Germany in the latter year. His success in both countries was brilliant.

Booth was married to Mary Devlin, an actress of Troy, N. Y., in 1860, her death occurring less than three years later. Their only child, a daughter, Edwina, still survives. In 1869 he married Miss Mary McVicker, daughter of Mrs. Runion, the actress, subsequently wife of Manager McVicker, of Chicago. Mrs. Booth died in 1881, leaving no children.

BOYHOOD OF EDWIN BOOTH.

Stories of His Childhood—How He Played Richard III. in His Father's Place

1853

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I called on Edwin Booth the other day at his rooms in the Players' Clubhouse. It was the 15th day of November, which used to be his birthday, but he told me he had changed all that, and this year his birthday came two days earlier, on the 13th.

I wondered how a man could change his birthday, and he explained. He had always kept the 15th until a few years ago his elder brother, Junius Brutus Booth, declared in the family that Edwin was born on the 13th of November, 1833, instead of the 15th, 1834. Their mother was strong for the latter date, and said she ought to know, for she certainly had been present on the occasion. But Junius insisted that he also was there, and remembered going for the doctor, as a lad of 10 or 12. He had mounted a horse in the middle of the night, and was accompanied by an old negro who was frightened half out of his wits by the falling stars, for it was the night of what Edwin called the "star shower" of nearly 60 years ago.

They looked up the almanac, but found there had been two of these showers, one in November, 1833, and another in November, '84.

The question remained in doubt, therefore, till last year, when Edwin stumbled on a letter of his brother's, dated November, 1833. It was addressed to some old actor, long since dead, and contained these words: "Mrs. Booth has just presented me with a man child." This settled the point, and the tragedian became a year older than he had always supposed. This year he is 59 instead of 58, so he never had a fifty-eighth birthday. Still the day of the month remained undecided, but as Junius had been right in the year the chances were he was right in the day, and the 13th is celebrated by Edwin's friends. His room was half filled with presents and flowers—reminders of their good will.

Mr. Booth was not well when I called and lay on a sofa while we talked of the first of his birthdays, which I had kept with him, 25 years ago. We were youngsters then, and very dear friends; the last we are still; our youth is gone, but affection remains. He was, as some of this generation may not know, one of the handsomest men of his time; graceful, agile, full of gesticulation, animation, intellectual fire; full, too, of humor, although a tragedian. He used often to say he would have been a comic actor only if it was too much trouble to be funny.

As we recalled the past the fire returned to his eyes and his face became as mobile as ever; he fairly acted as he lay there telling me stories of his boyhood and youth and reviving our old experiences. We once visited together the farmhouse where he was born under that brilliant sky and I had seen the old negro who went for the doctor. We had ransacked what was left of his father's wardrobe and library, looked over the old play-

bills and put on theatrical clothes—33 years ago. Ah me! those young and happy hours.

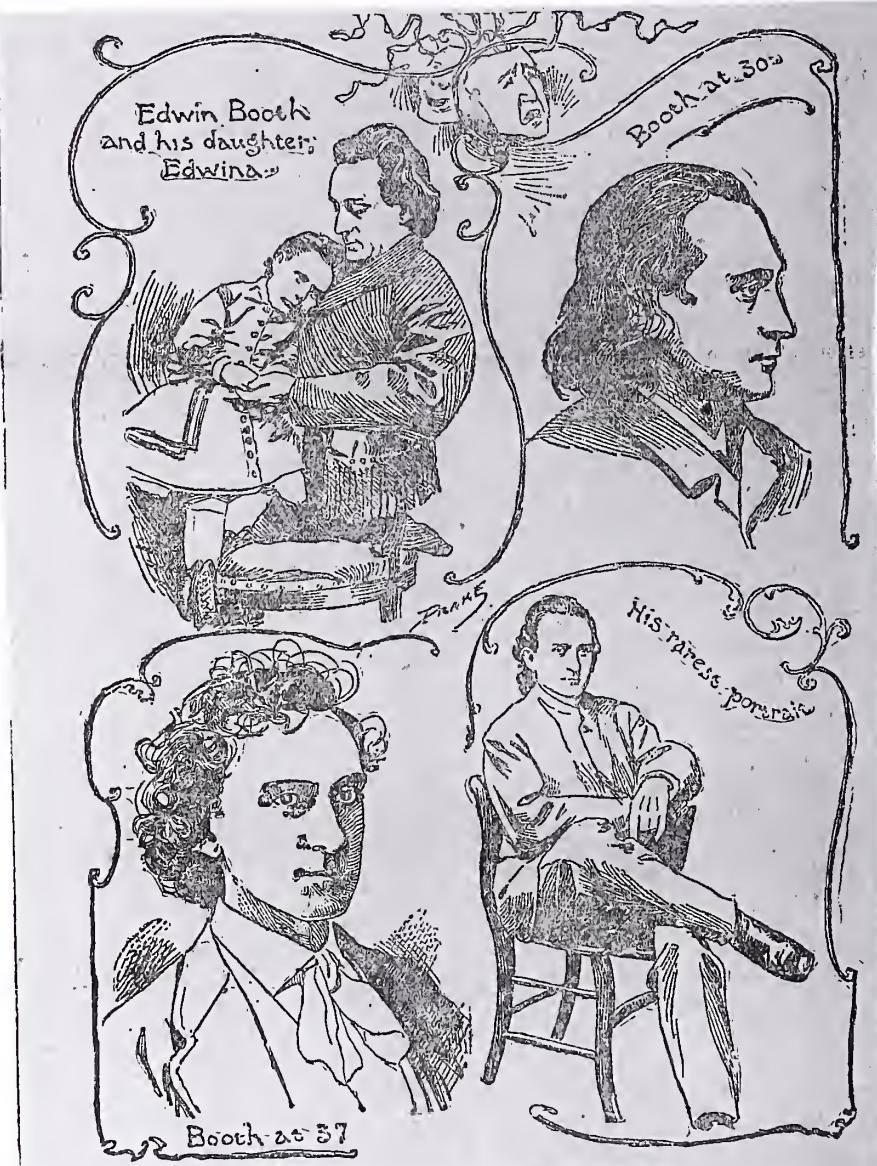
As our memories grew vivid the transformation went on. The feeble invalid on his couch became once more the splendid imaginative man of the stage, full of life and feeling and intellect, his whole frame instinct with expression, his features as much ablaze as in "Hamlet" or "Macbeth," his voice as musical and emotional as ever. I thought of the great scene in "Richelieu" when the decrepit Cardinal starts up before the frightened courtiers of Louis XIII. and proves that he is all himself again. Thank God! Booth did not fall back, like the priest in the play, into his former feebleness.

Edwin began his theatrical career at an early age. The son of the famous J. B. Booth, when he was only 3 or 4 years old his mother used to accompany his father to the playhouse and take the child along. She dressed her husband for his part, while "Teddy," as they called him, played among the wigs and paint pots and other theatrical belongings. As the evening waned, Teddy grew tired, and he remembers still a dressing bureau in the room which was opened, and a drawer pulled out for him to sleep in while his father played Richard or Othello almost within the baby's hearing. But the future Roscius slumbered while the very parts he was himself to fill went on outside his door. Little wonder that born a Booth and cradled in a greenroom he should himself become an actor.

His boyhood was partly passed in Baltimore, and next door to the Booth house stood an old-fashioned inn, kept by a Mr. Sloper, whose son was very intimate with Edwin. Both lads were infatuated with the stage and acted many a tragedy and farce together in a little room over the tavern for the amusement of their playmates. I have seen one of the playbills, preserved by Edwin's sister, who long afterward married young Sloper. He took the stage name of Clarke and became a popular comedian. In his case, as well as his companion's, the boy was father to the man.

The elder Booth was an eccentric, moody man, at times almost beside himself with his peculiarities. He would often start away just before the hour for the play, and the family had hard work to find him. Sometimes the fit would seize him between the acts, and more than once the curtain had to fall after only half the performance, because the chief actor had disappeared.

Edwin, in his boyhood, often followed his father and watched these moods. He was himself of a melancholy temperament, doubtless inherited, like his dramatic talent, from his erratic parent, and it must have been a pathetic sight—this fitful, gloomy man of rare ability and the boy of not more than 12 or 14 years, dark, handsome, with the same wonderful piercing eyes, strolling together through the streets at dark, near the stage door of the theater, the child endeavoring to persuade his father, the father unwilling but



SOME EARLY PORTRAITS OF BOOTH.

finally yielding, and then both entering the famous building where crowds were waiting for the performances, which rivaled those of Edmund Kean.

Inside the lad had often another strange duty to perform. After some great burst of passion on the boards the actor rushed to the wings exhausted, to take breath before he returned for a still more exciting effort; and at this moment while he gasped, the son poured, or rather threw, into his throat half a glass of brandy and water—and the resuscitated player went on. This occurred especially in the part of Sir Gilee Overreach, and while Edwin told me the story he half acted it before my eyes. His face took the terrible look of the wicked usurer, his eyes glared, his mouth twitched as he uttered the words of the palsied knight, and then described the rush to the wings, the gulp, the rush back to the boards, fairly screaming to his enemy while he ran, "You look pale, you look pale." He declared he could not



Edwin Booth at 23.

imagine how his father swallowed the draught and got back to his place in time; but he did, and the great scene went on.

Edwin always talked tenderly of the father whom in talent and temperament, but not in character, he so strongly resembled. He has told me of the elder's religious feeling, and I remember that in the library of the old farmhouse, Bibles and Korans and "Imitations of Christ" were placed on the shelves by the side of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson and Sheridan. The son often relates how his father used to recite the Lord's Prayer in the family so as to bring tears to every eye.

Young Booth acted with his father when not 15 years old, playing Tressel in "Richard III." as his first essay. The elder was not anxious for his son to adopt his own profession, but the lad was stage struck, and the father did not oppose. He never seemed to recognize the splendid genius which rivaled if not eclipsed his own.

One evening in 1849 the elder Booth was to play Richard III. at the old Chatham Street Theater in New York—long since destroyed. The house was crowded, but the great actor did not appear. Edwin was just 16, and of course had often seen his father in all his roles, but never dreamed of attempting as yet the greater characters. Strange to say, however, the stripling had committed

many of the parts to memory, and among these the whole of Richard III.

As the time of raising the curtain passed the house became impatient, and messengers were sent in every direction to find the missing player, but without success. Finally the manager, John R. Scott, himself no mean tragedian, said to the boy: "Ted, you must play Richard yourself, or the house will not be satisfied." Edwin was taken aback, and at first was unwilling, but such occurrences are common in theaters; someone must always be found to fill emergencies.

They dressed him in his father's clothes, which he hardly fitted. He made up the face himself, and he knew thoroughly his father's conception of the part. No explanation was made to the audience; he went upon the stage to speak the opening soliloquy, Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York,
an almost significant beginning.

The house for a moment or two did not discover the substitution; his face, when painted, was not unlike his father's in the part, and his tones, even then, resembled those of the elder Booth. By the time he was recognized he had made a good impression. There was no dissatisfaction expressed. The audience at first was curious, afterward interested and soon applauded. At the end of the act the manager led out the boy to a complacent crowd and said something about the "worthy son of an illustrious sire," which brought down the house. The play went on to the end, and this was Edwin Booth's first performance of Richard III., in which he afterward won such renown.

Edwin found his father at home after the play, but never told him that he had literally stepped in his shoes. To this eccentric genius it might have seemed a premonition. And, indeed, it was only a year or two before the elder Booth had passed forever from the boards, and the son was playing all his father's famous parts.

MEMORIES OF EDWIN BOOTH.

Traits of Character Shown in Conversation and in Letters.
(Wm. Bispham in the Century. 1893)

In the splendid theater built by Mr. Booth in New York and called by his name there was a very convenient and pleasant anteroom to Mr. Booth's dressing room, where he would sit between the acts, when it was not necessary to make any change in his dress and receive his friends. Many a night I have sat there with him while he puffed great clouds of smoke from his pipe, which was his one comfort in the intervals of his work, and friends came and went in quick succession. It was a veritable levee, made picturesque by the fact that our host was for the time Othello, Richelieu, Hamlet or Richard III.

At these times he was in his very best mood, and would tell story after story of his life and adventures, and of his meeting with famous men and women—all of the deepest interest and told in the most vivid manner. One story of his trip to the Sandwich Islands remains with me. He had gone there in 1854 in company with his comrade, Mr. David C. Anderson, en route to Australia, and they were to play in the Royal Hawaiian Theater. They had hired a native to paste up the bills announcing the performance; this had to be done with a preparation named "poe-poe," made from a vegetable called "tara-tara," which is a favorite food in Honolulu, but the poor man was so hungry that yielding to the temptation he incontinently ate up the paste, and to their surprise no bills appeared. When the reason was ascertained they feared to trust another native, and it was therefore agreed that as Booth was the younger he should act as bill-poster, and it came to pass that every night after the performance Edwin went about the city with his play-bills and bucket of paste and put up with his own hands the posters announcing what the company would play on the following night. And he assured me that he did this honestly, and did not eat any of the paste!

Another story related to a skull which Edwin had in his room. It was that of a noted horse-thief named Fontaine, alias Lovett, whose case had aroused the interest of Junius Brutus Booth, who had unavailingly tried to save him from the gallows, whereupon Fontaine had bequeathed this to him as a token of gratitude. But Mrs. Booth was horrified by it, and at once sent it back to the physician to whose care it had been intrusted for delivery to her husband. Years after this, one day when Edwin was in Louisville, preparing for his work at night, a small negro boy made his appearance with a basket covered by a white cloth. "What's that?" said Edwin. "Dunno, sah," said the boy: "guess it's a present from massa." "Take the cloth off," said Edwin, and the boy did as he was told, but shrieked aloud and fled quickly from the room. On looking in the basket, Booth saw the skull, and with it a note from the physician saying that he was restoring it to its proper owner.

Booth's interpretation of difficult passages in Shakespeare's plays were most clear and convincing. I remember his telling how he first came to understand the real meaning of Hamlet's saying to Polonius, "Yourself, sir, shall grow as old as I am if like a crab you could go backward." He was walking on the sea shore, I think near Long Branch, and suddenly saw a crab come out of the water, and, watching it attentively, saw it walk out backward from its shell, which it left on the sand, thus proving Shakespeare's marvelous knowledge of nature, for this crab was what is known as a "shredder," and in leaving its old shell regained its youth and entered on a new career.

Among the letters is the following, written to Mr. Bispham in reply to the latter's expressions of sympathy relative to the actor's financial troubles, which had just culminated in the closing of his theatre:

"DETROIT, February 15, 1874. — * * * 'If I were as tedious as a king' I could but thank you, my dear boy, for all the good things you say to me. As it is 'I am not of many words, but I thank you,' briefly, but sincerely, with all my heart. You were almost the first to send me words of sympathy, though I am sure all my friends feel it. This is by no means the heaviest blow my life has felt, and I shall recover from it very shortly if my creditors have any feeling whatever.

"My disappointment is great, to be sure, but I have the consciousness of having tried to do what deemed my duty. Since the talent God has given me can be made available for no other purpose, I believe the object I devote it to is worthy of self-sacrifice.

"I gave up all that most men hold dearest, wealth and luxurious ease, nor do I complain because that unlucky 'slip twixt the cup and the lip' has spilled all my tea.

"With a continuance of the health and popularity the good Lord has thus far blessed me with, I will pay every 'sou,' and exclaim with 'Don Cæsar,' tho' in a different spirit, 'I have done great things—if you doubt me ask my creditors.'

"Of course, I see some years of hard work before me, all for a 'dead horse,' too, not a very cheering prospect. But I'll 'worry' it thro', and, thank God with all my heart when I can ery 'quits' with my neighbor. Adieu!

Yours, EDWIN.
The following extract from a letter written from Dublin affords a glimpse of Mr. Booth's patriotic and humorous side:

"SHELBOURNE HOTEL, (you know where, be javers!) July 4teenth, Ateen hunder an' 80.— I determined that when I reached Dublin I'd stop several days to breathe and write letters, but somehow I have not been able to accomplish more than a few necessary. London notes in reply to those received. Well, here we are, both in health and well pleased with our experience, both by land and sea, thus far. But, barring the antiquities and the beds and the civility and gouging and the weather, all that I've yet seen falls behind America. Spread-eagleism has always disgusted me, but during the past few days I have felt my tail and wing feathers sprout awful.

"I find myself pooh-poohing everything I see, taste or smell, and comparing them with what we 'av at 'ome, you know. The gap of Dunlo—some place in Killarney—was wild and very picturesque, with its views and peasant ghouls, but the lovely lakes are but a feeble hint of what Lake George affords. By the bye, how delicious the Irish are in Ireland!"

Genius and Fortune.

[From the New York Sun.]

The accumulation of an estate of nearly \$700,000 by the late Edwin Booth is suggestive of the large profits made by an actor of great eminence. It is also an indication that the popular impression that dramatic genius, and artistic genius generally, is incompatible with the keeping of money, is not justified by the facts.

Mr. Booth's fortune must have been gathered almost wholly during the last twenty years of his life, or since the failure of the theater which he established for himself in 1869, at the corner of Twenty-third street and Sixth avenue. The circumstance that it consists of personal estate only, with the exception of a place at Newport, suggests also that it grew altogether out of his professional gains during that short period; and it indicates how great those were and how prudent he was in their management.

In this prudence, however, he was not extraordinary among actors. Edwin Forrest, with whom he competed for the popular favor at the beginning of his successful career, left a large fortune also, when he died in 1876. Charlotte Cushman, whose dramatic career was simultaneous, and who died in 1876, left a very handsome estate. Mr. Henry Irving, the distinguished English actor, is a man of fortune; and many of the men and women of the stage are now the possessors of wealth or of a competence which renders them pecuniarily independent. The great mass may spend as they go along, taking no thought for the morrow, or having no faculty for accumulation even when they have incomes large enough to afford an opportunity for its exercise; but it is the same with the run of other people, of men of affairs and professional men.

The genius for making money and the genius for keeping it are apart and distinct. If they always went together, the decrease in the poverty of the world would be enormous; but proportionately they seem to be united in men of artistic genius as often as in those without that great gift of heaven, if not oftener. Nearly all the artists of high distinction at this time in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and the drama have accumulated fortunes, which in many cases are large. They are receiving incomes which justify extravagance; but they are not wasting money more than other successful men, they are not more likely to acquire habits of dissipation, and apparently there is not less practical sagacity among them.

An art which may not be so conducive to great material prosperity is the literary art. Very few writers, no matter how great their distinction, have ever got rich out of writing, and at the present day the number who have done so is so small that we could include them all in a short list. Fortunes like that of Edwin Booth and those of the illustrious painters, sculptors, musicians and architects of this time are almost unknown among the men of literature. The incomes of the great body of writers best known to the people are meager as compared with those of the others. They are much less than the incomes of lawyers

and physicians of parallel professional eminence.

As things are, if a man wants to get rich, literature alone offers him a poor show for the gratification of his ambition. He may get along very comfortably; but the chances are against his accumulating a fortune like Mr. Booth's out of his professional gains, no matter how clever his art, now saving he may be, and how extraordinary his business sagacity. That is why Mr. Walter Besant and his colleagues are finding so much fault with the publishers. They think that the publishers are getting rich at their expense, that the author furnishes the fuel, and that the publisher warms himself by the fire while the author stays out in the cold.

But what other remedy is there than that the author should be both the writer of the book and its manufacturer for the market? He must unite both profits in himself, or take for his manuscript what the competition of trade will give him. If he have not a combination of qualities and aptitudes enabling him to be both a man of business and a writer, he must pay for his defects. The picture is done when it is painted. The book requires the expenditure of labor, capital, and enterprise upon it after it has been written by the author; and without that expenditure it is worthless.

Hence, when fortune comes to literary men, outside of ten or fifteen in a generation, it comes to editors who get both the writing and a manufacturing profit; but these, too, are few. The capacity to make a successful newspaper man is rare, and like all rare gifts it is sometimes richly rewarded.

How Booth Prayed. 1893

[From the New York Times.]

"Speaking of Edwin Booth," said an old lady, "reminds me of a story my husband used to tell of a memorable encounter with the elder Booth. He (my husband) was traveling on horseback through the South before our marriage, when stress of weather made him take refuge in the home of the great actor. He was ensconced in the guest chamber for the night, and was just dropping off to sleep as his unlocked door slowly opened. He started up to see his host enter, bearing aloft a candle that cast a sickly ray across the bed. Advancing with measured tread, he asked in a low, deep voice.

"Have you prayed to-night?"

"The guest admitted that his devotions had been missed.

"Rise, kneel by that bedside, and say the Lord's prayer," was the next speech. Impressed by his manner, my husband tumbled out of bed, fell on his knees, and repeated the words of the prayer.

"Is that all you make out of the grandest utterance in literature?" cried Booth.

"And he dropped upon his knees, put his palms together, and then, my husband used to say, in a voice of surpassing strength and melody, began his supplication, giving to the familiar sentences such depths of eloquence and such richness of meaning as they had never possessed for him before."

ning, December 6, 1893.

NOTES OF CELEBRITIES.

Edwin Booth on the Modern Drama.

The following letter is printed in William Winter's new book, "The Life and Art of Edwin Booth":

"My knowledge of the modern drama is so very meager that I never permit my wife or daughter to witness a play without previously ascertaining its character. This is the method I pursue. I can suggest no other, unless it might be by means of a 'dramatic censor,' whose taste or judgment might, however, be frequently at fault.

"If the management of theaters could be denied to speculators and placed in the hands of actors who value their reputation and respect their calling, the stage would at least afford healthy recreation, if not, indeed, a wholesome stimulus to the exercise of noble sentiments. But while the theater is permitted to be a mere shop for gain—open to every huckster of immoral gimcracks—there is no other way to discriminate between the pure and the base than through the experience of others. Yours truly, EDWIN BOOTH."

EDWIN BOOTH'S GRAVE.

No Monument There, but Many Flowers—A Pathetic Incident.

Mr. W. E. C. Harrison sends the Sun an account of his pilgrimage to the grave of his friend, Edwin Booth. He says: "On my recent trip to Boston I visited Mount Auburn, near Cambridge, with its ranges of wooded hills, deep vales, peaceful ponds and, shady dells. Passing to the stone tower, which rises above the masses of trees, near which is located the grave, it is found that no tomb or monument marks the spot. Only nature's tributes, beautiful flowers, entirely cover the grave. 1894

"In the middle of the mound a thick cluster of green Deutzia flourishes, which bears a beautiful white flower, emblematic of the purity of Booth's life. Around the border of the grave forget-me-nots, violets and other flowers blossom. Flowers, beautiful flowers, that he loved so well. Flowers that the fair Ophelia gathered whilst the name of Hamlet engrossed her thoughts.

"Beneath this mound lay a boyhood friend, always generous to a fault, mild, and in disposition gentle as a woman. Through my hands had he dispensed aid to the suffering and needy, to his own old friends and the friends of his sire. I recalled the incident of his requesting me to visit old Sandy Jamison, who was suffering with a cancer of the stomach. The old man, then 80 odd years of age, had formerly been the leader of the Holiday Street Theater Orchestra, and was a friend of the elder Booth, whose memory he revered, while his love for Edwin was almost idolatrous.

"Edwin had heard he was sick and in distress; a check was inclosed to me to hand him. I visited the old man, and after talking with him for awhile I delicately spoke of Edwin Booth and how he sympathized with the sufferer, and then I handed him the check. The tottering old man arose to his feet, with tears rolling down his furrowed cheeks, exclaiming: 'From Edwin! God bless the boy. He is just like his father—just like his father.' Then he sank into the chair with tears coursing between his wasted fingers as he clasped them to his face.

"A few weeks after poor Jamison was dead. I wrote Edwin an account of the scene. In reply he wrote: 'I do not preserve many letters, but yours of the scene with poor Sandy Jamison I shall ever keep.' —Baltimore Sun.



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THE REAL EDWIN BOOTH.

LETTERS OF EDWIN BOOTH,
WITH INTRODUCTION BY HIS DAUGHTER.¹



Y father's earlier letters to me, covering a period of some seven years, were written chiefly during my absence at a convent school. Written, as they were, during his long professional tours throughout the country, these letters helped to lift me out of my narrow sphere, and took me into a new and broader field, where my father was for me always the chief actor, whether they breathed of his professional life, of his domestic or social experiences, or of loving advice, paternal care, and solicitude. No matter how weary, how irritated by conditions then unknown to me, he was sure to send me weekly missives. Though frequently expressed in a humorous vein, in order to entertain and divert me, I can now read between the lines, and appreciate the noble effort he made to throw off the burdens which during those years must have bowed him down. Under the weight of financial difficulties, the result of misplaced confidence and childlike trust in others, he rallied when his paternal duty and love reminded him of me.

I have abstained from publishing more than a small fraction of his entire correspondence, and offer only such as will prove of special interest and value in the public eye. It appears to me, on re-reading many of these let-

ters after a lapse of years, that they present a side of my father's temperament and disposition hitherto concealed from his friends, as well as from the general public. They reveal a depth of soul, a firmness of purpose, a high resolve to battle against life's struggles, which make it incumbent upon me to publish them. They constitute, indeed, a better and more complete autobiography than that which I have in the past so often urged upon him to write. I fear his innate modesty and reluctance to speak of his own triumphs and misfortunes would have severely handicapped him in such an undertaking. But his letters to me, and to his many friends, speak of him as he was, without reserve or fear of harsh criticism.

To these same valued friends I am greatly indebted for a large part of this correspondence, which is published not only for the benefit of the many who have known and revered him as the artist and interpreter of Shaksperian drama, but as a tribute of filial respect and love.

MY MOTHER.

As a necessary accompaniment to these few reminiscences of my father, I will quote some extracts from letters written by my mother (Mary Devlin) prior to their marriage. They prove an essential chapter in the life of a man then stepping into fame and greatness, and make more clearly manifest the spiritual union of two sympathetic souls so soon to be parted by death.

My father has confided to me the gentle yet

¹ The following forms part of the preface written by the daughter of Edwin Booth to precede a collection of his letters from which those appended are selected.
—EDITOR.

powerful influence exerted over his artistic career by my young mother, herself an actress of no mean capacity. Her whole being became so centered in her lover and husband, her "Hamlet," as she so often called him, that my father felt the reflex of her refined intellectuality, both in his art, and in his attitude toward her in whom he found his purest and highest ideals sweetly embodied. Though it is my misfortune never to have known my mother, her letters, and the recollections of her many friends, place her before me in the sanctified light of noble womanhood—a faithful wife, a blessed mother.

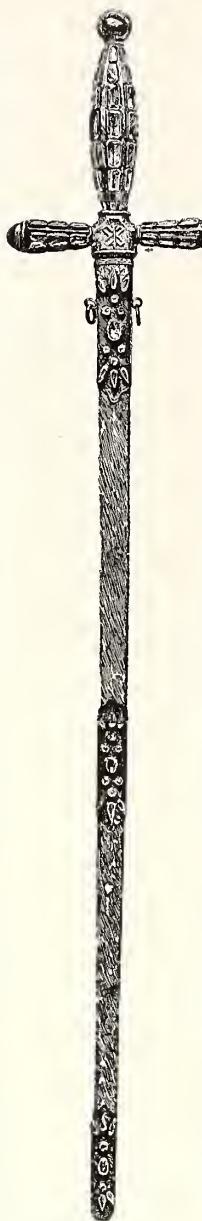
In the year 1860 she writes:

We must ever dwell "above the thunder," treading beneath our feet the black clouds of dissension. You are too great ever to descend to discord; I have too high an appreciation of the divine spark God has gifted you with, and which you intrust to my care, ever to cause you to seek another sphere than your natural one.

The above extract is from a letter written during my mother's betrothal to my father, and while she herself was yet upon the stage. I find in another letter, dated the same year, the following:

Last night I sat by the window thinking of you, and disturbed only by the mournful sighing of the wind. I wondered in "this stillness of the world without, and of the soul within," what our lives in the future would be; and I looked to see if upon the clouds I could trace any semblance of it. This led me into an odd train of thought, in which I recalled a susceptibility of yours you once told me of. You remember, 't was that a passing wind sometimes suggested to you the past, and, carrying you years back, set you dreaming. It is not wonderful that *you* should have such emotions—sensitive natures are prone to them; then why, I ask myself, should my eyes have filled with tears, and trembled lest *you* should experience them again? Ah, dear Edwin, 't was a fear that they would lead you from my side and leave me once more alone. I am very wrong, doubtless, to have allowed so simple a fact to impress me, and am still more to blame to repeat it here; for have you not "died into life," as Keats says—and I should wean you from all remembrance of the tomb; and so I promise to do.

These letters were written by my mother when scarcely twenty years of age. Her death



RICHLY JEWELLED SWORD
WORN IN "RICHARD III."

occurred three years afterward. She constantly refers, as in the following passage, to the sacred mission she is about to fulfil as fiancée and wife:

This morning, in my walk, I was thinking of the being God had given me to influence and cherish. For *you* have ever seemed to me like what Shelley says of himself—"a phantom among men"—"companionless as the last fading storm," and yet my spirit ever seems lighter and more joyous when with you. This I can account for only by believing that a mission has been given me to fulfil, and that I shall be rewarded by seeing you rise to be great and happy.

Ah! the angels surely will rejoice in heaven when that is achieved. Edwin, I have never told you yet, have I, of all the odd thoughts I have had, and do have, about you? Well, on some of the days to come, when I am influenced by your loved presence, and after the singing of some pretty song, perhaps I will tell you.

My mother's love of music, and her naturally beautiful voice, ever proved a delight to my father, and he continued in later years to love the old melodies she used to sing to him in the early days of their courtship and marriage.

The purely unselfish love which my mother bore for my father is manifested in her earliest letters to him. His art was ever the absorbing theme, and although so young herself, she was capable of giving him wise counsel in all things. She says again:

If my love is selfish, you will never be great: part of you belongs to the world. I *must* remember this, and assist in its "blossoming," if I would taste of the ripe fruit. That will prove a rich reward.

LETTER TO CAPTAIN RICHARD
F. CARY.¹

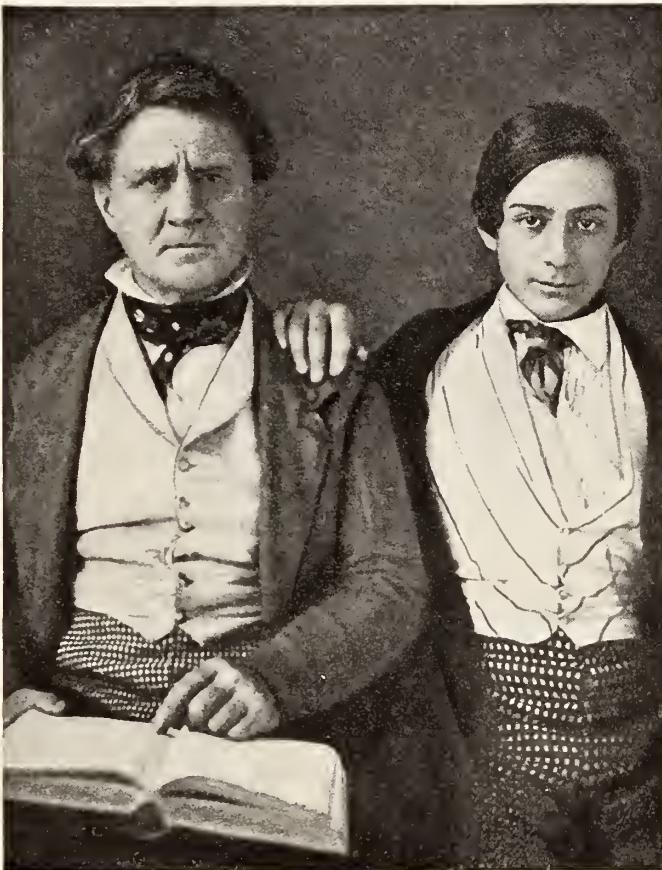
430 FRANKLIN ST., June 30, 1860.

FRIEND RICHARD: I pray your highness to pardon my long delay in replying to your last kind letter; but the fact is, my head is turned. I am like the chap of old who wrote to his father, ending with this line: "I am, my dearest charmer, ever thine." In short, my head is full of "Marry Mary—marry"—marriage. Those are the three important degrees at present. The second, which implies fear, hope, regret, bliss, love, etc., being a sufficient excuse for anything except suicide; so bear with me, Richard, and don't "impute my

¹ Brother-in-law of Louis Agassiz.

silence to light love" of your delightful company, but rather to the tumultuous heavings of that sea through which you have already passed to a joyful haven. Phew! It takes me so long to reach a period that I almost lose the thread of my "yarn" on the journey. This day week—July 7, "young Edwin" is no more! A sober, steady, *pater-familias* will then—excuse me a moment, there's a hand-organ playing "Love not" under my win-

found my mother, sister, and Joe. He gives a glowing account of the fight. Says no one was killed. Ten times the number of rebels could not have taken the fort by any means, had Anderson been provisioned. We all start at 7 A. M. for Bethel, Maine, where I hope to have a quiet time for a few weeks, at the end of which I sincerely hope to be summoned to England. I've already received a request to visit the Haymarket, and



EDWIN BOOTH AND HIS FATHER, 1850.

dow, and I must defer this till a more appropriate air strikes up. Half an hour has elapsed, and "A te O Cara" swells on the air—a more inspiring melody than the former, but still not sufficiently so to stimulate me to the performance of a task (to me almost impossible), that of writing a sensible letter. . . . Yours distractedly, BOOTH.

TO CAPTAIN RICHARD F. CARY.

SUNDAY, 30, 1861.

MY DEAR DICK: I cannot tell you how sad I feel at your going away without bidding you good-bye. After several ineffectual attempts to find the camp I yesterday succeeded. Covered with dust, headed, and broiled, my wife and I reached the ground just in time to see the parade dismissed, when I learned that you were absent.

I had to visit New York last week, where I

about the middle of July I shall know definitely. But enough of myself. I manage, somehow, to appear very egotistical in my letters; I write of nothing else, it seems.

My dear Dick, you will not, I hope, omit any opportunity to "post" me as to your whereabouts, etc. I shall read with anxiety and interest every bulletin from the seat of war, and pray ever for your safety and distinction — of that I am sure if you only get a chance. My wife sends her blessings and heartfelt good-bye, and her sincere regret at not seeing you. There is no need of protestation, I trust, on my part, to assure you of the regret, the anxiety, the hope, the fear, I feel for you, but I will say, God in heaven bless and protect you! That you may return unscathed and glorious shall be the constant, fervent prayer of

Your friend,

NED.

TO ADAM BADEAU.

NEW YORK, 107 East 17th st.

May 18, 1863.

DEAR AD: I got your letter before I left Boston some weeks ago. You see I am now located in New York. I have taken Putnam's house (the publisher) furnished for six months, during which time I shall busy myself looking for a permanent home

— God is. And as surely as you and I are flesh and bones and blood, so are we also spirits eternal. I believe it beyond a doubt, and I believe, too, that she who sat beside me only a few weeks ago is living, and is near me now. This should make me happy, should it not? But it does not. . . . Ad, I never knew how much I loved her. I do not perhaps fully realize it yet; if I did the loss of my Aidenn might kill me. God is wise and just and



PHOTOGRAPHED BY CASE AND GETCHELL.
MRS. MARY DEVLIN BOOTH.

while on earth; something I can leave my child in ease of my departing, which God grant may not occur until I have become worthy of being united with her. . . . While Mary was here I was shut up in her devotion. I never dreamed that she could be taken from me — as I ever have lived, so live I now within; you would not think I suffer were you here with me; nor would I have you think that I do suffer constantly; it is only at times, as now. When I wrote you last it seems I was hopeful and patient; now I am torn with all sorts of hateful fancies; yet but an hour ago I might have written you a far different letter. Believe in one great truth, Ad

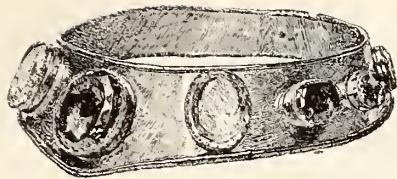
good in this, as in all things. I tell you, Ad, it is not well to forget God in our prosperity; we do not when we are sinking. . . .

TO MISS EMMA F. CARY.

November 11.

MY DEAR FRIEND: . . . I have been quite ill, as I told you in my last, nor am I yet in a condition for work; but I must soon get at it for a long winter campaign. On Friday, the 25th, without fail, the long-talked-of benefit "to Shakspere" will take place at the Winter Garden with the

TO MRS. RICHARD F. CARY.



CROWN WORN IN "MACBETH."

"Brothers Booth"—à la Hanlon—at the main-springs, and on the night following, *Hamlet* in a new dress (I wish Mr. W— were here to see it) will fret his brief hour every night until further notice.

. . . I voted (for Lincoln) t' other day—the first vote I ever cast, and, I suppose, I am now an American citizen all over, as I have been in heart. . . .

Saint Valentine's Day.

MISS CARY,

MY DEAR FRIEND: A little lull in the whirl of excitement in which my brain has nearly lost its balance affords me an opportunity to write to you. It would be difficult to explain the many little annoyances I have been subjected to in the production of "Richelieu," but when I tell you that it far surpasses "Hamlet," and exceeds all my expectations, you may suppose that I have not been very idle all this while. I wish you could see it.

Professor Peirce¹ has been here, and he will tell you of it. It really seems that the dreams of my past life—so far as my profession is concerned—are being realized. What Mary and I used to plan for my future, what Richard and I used laughingly to promise ourselves in "our model theater," seems to be realized—in these two plays, at least. As history says of the great cardinal, I am "too fortunate a man not be superstitious," and as I find my hopes being fulfilled, I cannot help but believe that there is a sufficient importance in my art to interest them still; that to a higher influence than the world believes I am moved by I owe the success I have achieved. Assured that all I do in this advance carries, even beyond the range of my little world (the theater), an elevating and refining influence, while in it the effect is good, I begin to feel really happy in my once uneasy sphere of action. I dare say I shall soon be contented with my lot. I will tell you this much: I have been offered the means to a speedy and an ample fortune, from all parts of the country, but prefer the limit I have set, wherein I have the power to carry out my wishes, though "on half pay," as it were. . . .

Ever your friend,
EDWIN BOOTH.

RING WORN IN "HAMLET"
DURING A PERIOD OF THIRTY
YEARS.

¹ The late Professor Peirce, professor of mathematics in Harvard University, father of Professor James Mills Peirce.

June 3, '64.

MY DEAR, DEAR FRIENDS: You know my heart, I cannot speak to you of comfort.

One after another the blows have fallen so heavily that souls unaided by God's unfaltering love, and faith stronger than death, would have sunk in despair beneath their crushing weight.

But in your hearts as in hers,—dear, dear mother, for so she always seemed to me, Mary's mother,—as in my own, there is a light which sorrow cannot quench; which guides us through the darkness of the grave; which reveals to us the secret of His mysterious works—the secret love! Oh, that I could give you the full companionship of that love as I have felt it since Mary's death, the peace that has filled my soul, and the strength that has flowed steadily into it since that terrible day! Could I give you this you would rejoice for her as I do, although my heart aches for you while I write. Oh, be assured, dear, dear ones, that they are together; that their knowledge now is so great that even our grief for their departure causes them no pain, so well they know how good it is for us to suffer.

That I was in the hearts of my noble Richard and his dear sister, while they were on the very threshold of Home, is a joy to me past all that earth can give me. I know I shall be welcomed there by them; they never forget us, never cease to love and care for us. When we meet, I know that I shall wonder how I could ever miss them, so brief will the separation then seem. If I feel this, dear friends, I who am so much lower in the grade of worthiness, how joyous must your hearts be when you reflect how near we all are to our unseen but real home—when you know that all that comes from Him is for our good.

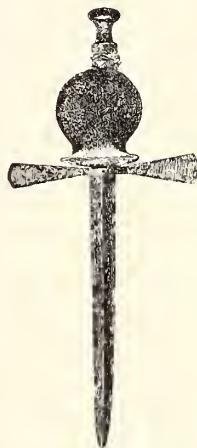
Oh, I feel such an intense love for God when sorrow touches me that I could almost wish my heart would always ache—I feel so near to Him, I realize His love so thoroughly, so intensely, at such times.

I did not mean to write so much, but this (my love I speak of) has carried me away. Several times I have stopped to brush the tears away that came for you, and to give vent to that long sigh which is a yearning of the spirit to follow its loved ones home; but I could not cease to write until I had given utterance to all that choked my heart.

Let this be for the dear good mother and sisters of our dear ones as for you.

Good-by. God bless and comfort you!

Your friend,
EDWIN BOOTH.

DAGGER USED IN
"MACBETH."

TO MISS EMMA F. CARY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Saturday, May 6, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I've just received your letter. I have been in one sense unable to write, but you know, of course, what my condition is, and need no excuses.

I have been, by the advice of my friends, "cooped up" since I arrived here, going out only occasionally in the evening. My health is good, but I suffer from the want of fresh air and exercise.

ferred, and died in doing. My baby, too, is there. Now that the greatest excitement is over, and a lull is in the storm, I feel the need of that dear angel; but during the heat of it I was glad she was not here.

When Junius and Mr. Clarke are at liberty, mother will come here and bring Edwina to me. I wish I could see with others' eyes; all my friends assure me that my name shall be free, and that in a little while I may be where I was and what I was; but, alas! it looks dark to me.

God bless you all for your great assistance in



EDWIN BOOTH'S DRESSING-TABLE, 1889.

Poor mother is in Philadelphia, about crushed by her sorrows, and my sister, Mrs. Clarke, is ill, and without the least knowledge of her husband, who was taken from her several days ago, with Junius.

My position is such a delicate one that I am obliged to use the utmost caution. Hosts of friends are stanch and true to me. Here and in Boston I feel safe. What I am in Phila. and elsewhere I know not. All I do [know] of the above-named city is that there is one great heart firm and faster-bound to me than ever. Sent in answer to dear Mary's prayers—I faithfully believe it. She will do what Mary struggled, suf-

my behalf; even dear Dick aided me in my extremity, did he not?

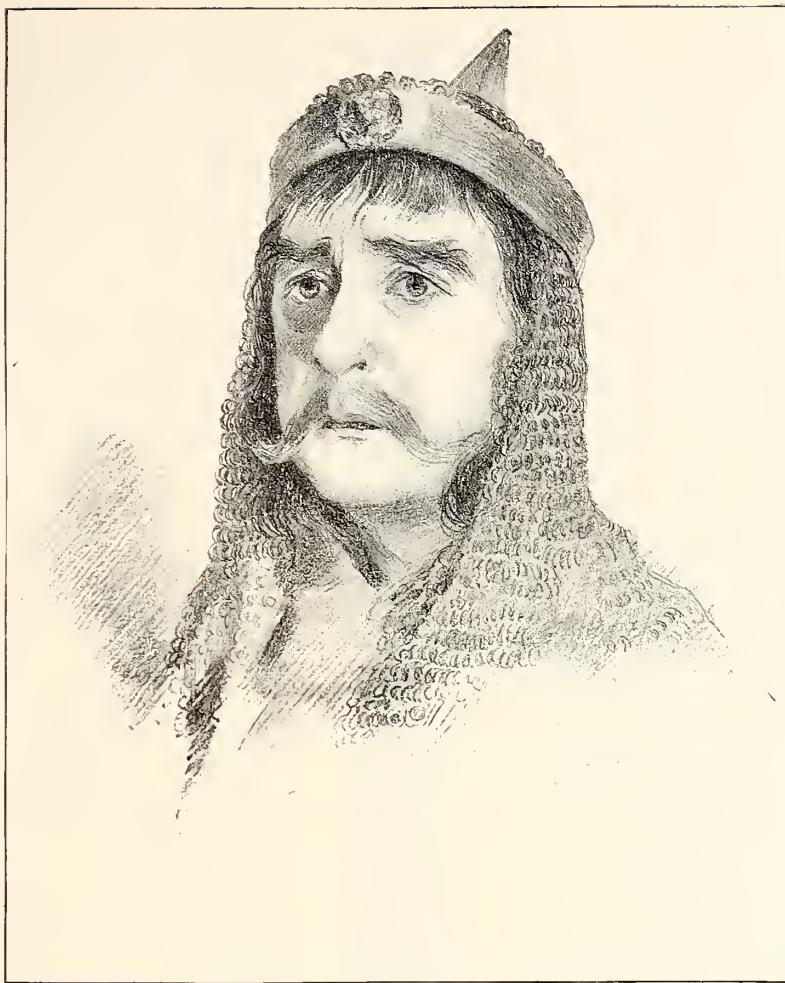
Give my love to all, and kisses to Georgie. . . . I do not think the feeling is so strong in my favor in Phila. as it is here and in Boston. I am not known there. . . .

Ever yours, EDWIN BOOTH.

TO MISS EMMA F. CARY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

NEW YORK, Nov. 24, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Pray forgive my neglect. I've been a little bothered of late, and could not bring my mind to a calm.



EDWIN BOOTH AS "MACBETH."

My affairs are quite unsettled. I don't know yet when I shall act, or what I shall do next. . . .

It seems a long time since I visited Auburn¹ last. I have lost the level run of time and events, and am living in a mist. But I am told my health is better than it ever was. I do not realize it, but am bored by people saying I am getting fat. I am a little Byronic in my dislike of such compliments, because I don't feel as I look.

Mother is very much broken, I think, poor soul! . . . She seems to have still a lingering hope in her heart that all this will prove to be a dream.

Yr faithful friend, EDWIN BOOTH.

TO MRS. R. F. CARY, BOSTON.

NEW YORK, Dec. 20, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND: . . . Let it pass; life is a great big spelling-book, and on every page we turn the words grow harder to understand the meaning of. But there is a meaning, and when the last leaf flops over, we'll know the whole lesson by heart.

¹ Mount Auburn Cemetery, where my mother was buried.

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You have also, doubtless, heard that I will soon appear on the stage. Sincerely, were it not for means, I would not do so, public sympathy notwithstanding; but I have huge debts to pay, a family to care for, a love for the grand and beautiful in art, to boot, to gratify, and hence my sudden resolve to abandon the heavy, aching gloom of my little red room, where I have sat so long chewing my heart in solitude, for the excitement of the only trade for which God has fitted me. . . .

I shall begin January 3 (Wednesday), with *Hamlet*. . . . Ever truly y'r friend,
EDWIN BOOTH.

TO MISS EMMA F. CARY.

TOLEDO (in the West), Sept. 27, 1868.

MY DEAR FRIEND: . . . I've heard of Dettmar. What you say of his scene with the *Ghost* I have often done; but the play (and especially that first act) is so long that I have often omitted it. Many do not like it; others (and I among them) consider it absolutely necessary to that magnificent scene. Omitting the burial and the rest of that scene is after the Garrick style of cur-

tailment. He slashed unmercifully; altered and changed scenes by wholesale to suit his ideas of stage effect. Now *I* (egotist!) intend to go even beyond Chas. Kean in my devotion to the sacred text of the late W. S. I intend restoring to the stage (to mine, at least) the unadulterated plays of Shakspere; his "Romeo and Juliet," not so performed since the days of Betterton, I fancy, unless Barry, in opposition to Garrick, revived it; "Richard III.," which Chas. Kean feared to attempt, and offered a weak apology for retaining the Cibber version. My respect for Kean runs high up to that point; there I turn back, and pity his feeble correction of Shakspere's geographical blunders in "Winter's Tale." He should have ascertained the name of the town in which the wise man lived who jumped into a brier-bush.

My affairs are greatly mixed. The theater will be completely roofed next week, and, I hope, opened in December early (about the 14th) with as good a company as it is possible to obtain in this country. The enterprise swelled gigantically on my hands, and has attained such proportions as would frighten any one whose bump of "don't-care-a-tive-ness" was less than mine. I'm in a very big puddle; if I can wade it, well; if not, why, as Bunsby would say, "well, too." I trust to fate, chance, or whoever that "sweet little cherub" be that looks out for me. Certain it is, I have had enough vexation regarding this same theater to drive me mad, and yet I am as calm and as careless as though the ultimate success was a fixed fact. It will entail a world of work and anxiety, but would n't life be long and dreary without these little worries and bothers?

I traveled West and South last season from Sept. 5 until June 9, made lots of money, and paid it out as fast as I could count it; have just begun my second tour, which will last until my theater opens. When I began the work, I expected to be acting in the theater by this time, but the usual obstacles—weather, rock strikes, etc., delayed it, and we are only just covering the "roof-tree."

I shall be in Boston week after next. When do you expect to be there? Apropos of Dettmar and the King's "little," I think the allusion to the courtier's wearing it is correct. Barry Sullivan did the same thing.

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

BOOTH'S THEATER, NEW YORK.

November 15, 1871.

MY OWN DEAR DAUGHTER: I arrived here last night, and found your pretty gift awaiting me.



BAUBLE PRESENTED TO
BOOTH, AND USED IN
THE "FOOL'S REVENGE."
"O NOBLE FOOL, O WORTHY
FOOL, MOTLEY'S
THE ONLY WEAR," IS EN-
GRAVED ON THE HANDLE.

Your letter pleased me very, very much in every respect, and your little souvenir gave me far more delight than if it were of real gold. When you are older you will understand how precious little things, seemingly of no value in themselves, can be loved and prized above all price when they convey the love and thoughtfulness of a good heart. This little token of your desire to please me, my darling, is therefore very dear to me, and I will cherish it as long as I live. If God grants me so many years, I will show it you when you are a woman, and then you will appreciate my preference for so little a thing, made by you, to anything money might have bought. God bless you, my darling! . . .

God bless you again and again!
Your loving father.

TO DAVID C. ANDERSON.

DUBLIN, July 15, 1880.

DEAR DAVY: Arrah Galoo! Hoo-roo! mabokalush faleen sockdalergarwhack, me bye!

I'm on the sod, wid a dudeen o' the rale ould bog-wood in me jaw, acushla! One week ago to-night I left the ship at Quanestown, and have been to Cork and Killarney in a fog; then spent a fine day in the cars, and reached here in the same old fog and rain, bad luck to 't!

Did yez iver come here? Don't! I did, but I won't again, mavourneen. Saving the antiquities and the foul weather, we can bate 'em in Yankee-dom. Lakes and hills and all the beautiful scenery and sights they boast of are 'way behind us, so they are.

Anent ancientiuties, I am writin' wid a pen that's mightier than the sword, videlicet a quill, from an old goose, or a hin, or else a fowl of some kind. A plume o' the weather, maybe; that's fowl enough.

Three days here, and to-morrow we are off for Belfast, stopping *en route* at several points of interest. Shall not reach London till latter part of August. Have had two offers from there, but not being what I want, I shall wait. Find friends and acquaintances everywhere; no trouble or inconvenience a sort of a canal-like voyage — no sea whatever. So far the trip has done us all good. Don't want to think of theater: won't, till my cash runs low. After a day or two at Belfast shall go to Glasgow, and see a little of Scotland before going to England and Wales. After a week or so in London, go to the continent. This day one month ago I was breakfasted in New York. It seems but day before yesterday. Poor mother is very sad and lonely now, I know that she misses

yet. Had a picture in

me very much. God bless her! Wish you were here with me. Had a jaunt in a jolting car to-day, from a place called Kingstown. Not any more in mine, I thank you. I like a trotter when I sit astride him, but a sidewise bump up and down for an hour ain't handsome, not at all, sir. How doth your bonne dame (no, that's not Irish), how's de ould 'oman? An' how's yersel', me darlint? I'll write ye Scotch next toime, maybe. All our loves to yees, all of yees.

McCullough has secured the spring months at Drury Lane; got ahead of me there. Irving keeps his place, and the only other tragedy-shop has lost caste of late; so I'm in the cold, as before. Clarke would let me in at the Haymarket, but I've been there onct before, ye know.

Good night, Davy. May the good God bless you and yours! Write me soon. Ever yours,
TED.

TO THE REV. DR. EWER.

LONDON, December 19, 1880.

MY DEAR EWER: So dazed have I been of late that I really forgot to whom I have and have not written. At all events, I remember that you were among the first on my long list of friends with whom I intended to shake hands after my *début*. I'll take it for granted that I did so after "Hamlet"; if not, forgive my negligence. Had that play been kept on, it would doubtless have pulled through the fog, which *Richelieu* dispelled with his first breath, although many of the so-called critics still see me through a glass darkly, and sniff their learned noses knowingly. All goes well, but slowly. I did not expect a sunburst, as my friends predicted, nor did I expect such kindness from the public, nor from private sources, as I have received.

Your water-cure, hay-fever letter is not where I can put my hand on it just now ('t is after midnight), and therefore, without reference to it, I may be repeating what I said in reply to it. I hope you have entirely got rid of that vexation, funny as it appears to be at a distance, and that good health will attend your Christmas, with other blessings, a hundred-fold. For the first time since childhood my sister and I will (D. V.) pass that day together. I wish our dear old mother could be with us. What a miserable existence is the actor's, especially if he is domestically inclined! Home is something denied to him. I've tried to fix myself, to settle down a dozen times, yet always comes some stern necessity to break camp and travel. I'd rather be at home, somewhere in America, quiet and secure from the publicity my profession brings, than be here feted and applauded, and tired with what's called fame. Bosh! it's my liver, I dare say;

the doctors tell me so. I suppose I'd be dissatisfied with any other lot. I'm a chronic growler, I fear. You may judge by this that I'm not over-elated by my success here. If I had a "pitful of kings" to act for, I should not be so. Royalty (unless I except the Duke of Connaught) has not yet deigned to notice my efforts; but titled nobs, and several citizens of high standing, have shown me great kindness. To-day we met at dinner the poet Robert Browning, and at the same house, on a former occasion, Huxley. The Dowager Marchioness of Ely, Her Majesty's lady-in-waiting, and several lesser lights near the throne, have shone serenely on my Yankeeship. Now is n't this enough to turn one's head? Yet, you see, I've been so accustomed to the purple; with kings and cardinals have I hobnobbed so familiarly since my boyhood, that I'm accustomed to these honors. . . . I'm inclined to think the "Passion Play" will not be given at Ammergau again; it has degenerated into a mere show.

I'm glad I saw it, although at the time I was disappointed. Would not look at it again, though it were presented within easy reach; but the scene of its performance — Ammergau — is worth a dozen visits, though so out of the way and uncomfortable. . . .

Ever yours, TED.

TO MR. STEDMAN.

PICCADILLY, LONDON,

December 24, 1880.

. . . I know how "run to earth" you are, and therefore do not expect you to write me very often. I know what you feel for me, and shall be more than satisfied if I get but a line of greeting only when you wish to try a new pen. It was very good of you, my dear boy, to write me, tired and busy as you are, and I cordially appreciate it. Yes, "Richelieu" has warmed them up, but I believe the houses would have been quite as full if I had kept "Hamlet" on the bills. There is little chance in that respect. The enthusiasm is greater, of course, for the theatrical situations of the former play compel it. . . . Ever yours,

EDWIN BOOTH.

"WINDSOR HOTEL," July 28, 1881.

DEAR SIR: I can give you very little information regarding my brother John. I seldom saw him since his early boyhood in Baltimore. He was a rattle-pated fellow, filled with quixotic notions. While at the farm in Maryland he would charge on horseback through the woods, "spouting" heroic speeches with a lance in his hand — a relic of the Mexican war — given to father by some soldier who had served under Taylor. We regarded him as a good-hearted, harmless, though wild-brained, boy, and used



CANE CARRIED IN
"THE TAMING OF
THE SHREW."



WOODEN PIPE USED IN "HAMLET."

to laugh at his patriotic froth whenever secession was discussed. That he was insane on that one point no one who knew him well can doubt. When I told him that I had voted for Lincoln's reëlection he expressed deep regret, and declared his belief that Lincoln would be made King of America; and this, I believe, drove him beyond the limits of reason. I asked him once why he did not join the Confederate army. To which he replied, "I promised mother I would keep out of the quarrel, if possible, and I am sorry that I said so." Knowing my sentiments, he avoided me, rarely visiting my house, except to see his mother, when political topics were not touched upon—at least in my presence. He was of a gentle, loving disposition, very boyish and full of fun,—his mother's darling,—and his deed and death crushed her spirit. He possessed rare dramatic talent, and would have made a brilliant mark in the theatrical world. This is positively all that I know about him, having left him a mere school-boy, when I went with my father to California in 1852. On my return in 1856 we were separated by professional engagements, which kept him mostly in the South, while I was employed in the Eastern and Northern States.

I do not believe any of the wild, romantic stories published in the papers concerning him; but of course he may have been engaged in political matters of which I know nothing. All his theatrical friends speak of him as a poor crazy boy, and such his family think of him. I am sorry I can afford you no further light on the subject.

Very truly yours, EDWIN BOOTH.

TO HORACE H. FURNESS.

29 CHESTNUT STREET, BOSTON,
May 12, 1885.

MY DEAR FURNESS: Ever since I left you I have been pacing the "Rialto," my gaberdine wrapped about me,¹ but with my eyes fixed on the "Sagittary." In other words, I have been thinking more of *Iago* than of *Shylock*. In Act III I made some remark regarding *Desdemona's* boldness, which, I'm sure, does not express my opinion of her. I was *Iago* when I wrote it, not my cold-blooded self; his opinion of the "guineahen" influenced me when I said "she was bolder than her father supposed." My own notion is that in the very extravagance of innocence she exclaimed impulsively, I wish "that Heaven had made me such a man," not appreciating the dan-

¹ At Mr. H. H. Furness's desire, my father had aided him in compiling his *Variorum* on Shakspere's plays by explaining many points in his own interpretation of Shaksperian characters.

gerous nature of her words, and even when she said "if I had a friend that loved her," etc., it was in courtesy, not inconsistent with the paddling of palms, which was a common custom of the time, and thought innocent—except by *Iago*. I think that *Othello*, as guileless and impulsive as *Desdemona*, mistook her meaning for his "cue," or "hint," to speak. I am sure, too, that she burned with shame when she realized what she had unconsciously done in the way of wooing, and maybe cried herself to sleep that night; but for all that she did not refuse the suit of him whose mental beauty was affined to her own. She saw *Othello's* visage in his mind; had she not been similarly endowed she might have been fascinated as school-girls are by actors, preachers, and the like, asked his autograph, giggled, and said, "Yes," to repent at leisure. She never repented her love and marriage, not though it killed her father; even in her own death she was firm in her devotion to him, to whose "honors and valiant parts" she had consecrated her very soul. (I might say something here averse to the "marriage of true minds," but I forget the passage.) She was not the darling "daisy" we see upon the stage, in white satin of the latest cut, and wax pearls, gabbling the precious text by rote; but a true woman, with a mind of her own, a deathly devotion to the man of her choice, and as pure and artless as a baby. 'T is absurd for me to say this to you, who know more of Shakspere in a moment than I've learned in thirty years, but that note of mine (or rather *Iago's* comment on it) distresses me, and I want you to understand me rightly. I am slow at expression, and get awfully mixed at times, frequently conveying the very opposite idea to what I intend, and often forget the very gist of my subject. But this you will understand and believe of me: if my notions concerning the two characters of Shakspere that I have given any thought to "have any power to move you" to the pursuit of your great object, I am happily rewarded, and ask "no doit of usance" for my twaddle in the form of commendation other than your own, privately given, proud as I would be if merely glanced at in the progress of your work. Now 't is daylight, and I am going to bed—with my gaberdine about me, and will cuddle up with *Shylock* till I lose him in sleep. I wish I could describe to you the white-lipped, icy smile, the piercing glance at *Othello's* half-averted face, and the eager utterance with which my father spoke the lines "Ay, there's the point: as to be bold with you," etc., but I cannot; and if I could at any time, I would not attempt to do so now—I'm too sleepy. . . .

Thine own,
EDWIN BOOTH.

TO HORACE H. FURNESS.

NEWPORT, June 30, 1885.

MY DEAR FURNESS: . . . I fear that I can be of no service to you in dealing with the "Merchant." Somehow I can feel no sort of inspiration or spirituality in the atmosphere of that play. *Shylock* seems so earthy that the little gleams of light that I have perceived while acting some other parts are absent, and I can see no more than what is clear to the "naked eye." However, I will tug at him during the summer; in the mean time let me be assured that you are bravely and cheerfully "pegging away" at "Othello." . . .

Affectionately yours,
EDWIN BOOTH.

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

NEW YORK, January 5, 1888.

. . . I have seen Rose several times, and shall say good-by to-morrow. I do all I can for her, but nothing on earth can render her lonely life less weary, poor soul! As for God's reward for what I have done, I can hardly appreciate it; 't is more like punishment for misdeeds (of which I've done many) than grace for good ones (if I've done any). Homelessness is the actor's fate; physical incapacity to attain what is most required and desired by such a spirit as I am slave to. If there be rewards, I certainly am well paid, but hard schooling in life's thankless lessons has made me somewhat of a philosopher, and I've learned to take the buffets and rewards of fortune with equal thanks, and in suffering all to suffer — I won't say *nothing*, but comparatively *little*. Dick Stoddard wrote a poem called "The King's Bell," which fits my case exactly (you may have read it). He dedicated it to Lorimer Graham, who never knew an unhappy day in his brief life, instead of to me, who never knew a really happy one. You must n't suppose from this that I'm ill in mind or body: on the contrary, I am well enough in both; nor am I a pessimist. I merely wanted you to know that the sugar of my life is bitter-sweet; perhaps not more so than every man's whose experience has been above and below the surface. . . . Business has continued large, and increases a little every night; the play will run two weeks longer. Sunday, at four o'clock, I start for Baltimore, arriving there at ten o'clock. . . .

To-morrow, a meeting of actors, managers, and artists at breakfast, to discuss and organize, if possible, a theatrical club¹ like the *Garrick* of London. . . .

TO THE SAME.

NEW YORK, November 14, 1888.

. . . I could not write yesterday, as I intended, for the whole day was a whirl until long after midnight. Your most welcome portrait came to greet

me first, — the previous day, in fact, — and that pleased me very much. It does not do you justice, but 't is a fine piece of work. Flowers and fruits from many quarters, a little gold pencil from D —, and some silk handkerchiefs from Barrett. I must have had a hundred dozen silk handkerchiefs given me at various times by different persons. . . .

I've had an irreparable loss in the midst of all this fun; the dear little knife your mother gave me twenty-seven years ago, and which I've always carried about with me, is gone! I think I dropped it at supper Saturday night . . . at Delmonico's; they have searched in vain for it. I never missed anything so much. The pictures of babies amuse and delight every one that calls, and to all of whom I exhibit them. . . .

TO OLIVER J. LAY.

HOFFMAN HOUSE, Dec. 26, 1888.

MY DEAR MR. LAY: I have heard that some of my friends among the "Players" desire to compliment me by placing a portrait of myself (in character) on the wall of the club reading-room, as a surprise for me on the opening night, and that your *Hamlet* has been suggested for that purpose.

On some other occasion I could not decline such a manifestation of good feeling; but under present circumstances — while the house is yet my own, to be presented by me to others — I shrink from the indelicacy I should be guilty of were I to permit any conspicuous portrait of myself to be exhibited. Therefore I request your non-compliance with the wishes of my over-zealous friends, who, no doubt, will consider me morbidly sensitive on the subject. I may be so, but 't is my nature, and no effort of mine can overcome my aversion of anything suggestive of self-glorification, which a prominent portrait of myself on such an occasion would evince.

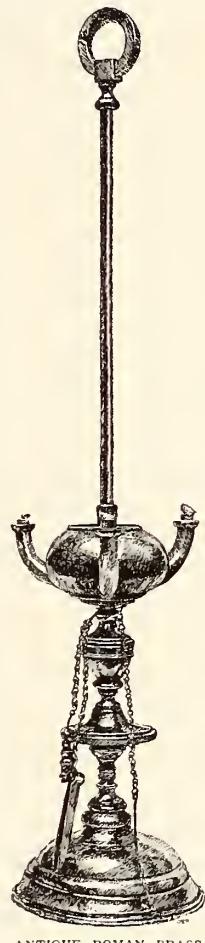
Since the secret has "leaked out," and I am no longer a stranger to their diabolical (?) plot, I shall request the gentlemen who are interested in the well-meant compliment to spare my blushes till some future time, when the property will be theirs to decorate as it may please them best. I have written to acquaint you with my feelings on this subject, which I am sure you will respect. Very truly yours, EDWIN BOOTH.

TO HIS DAUGHTER.

THE PLAYERS, 16 GRAMERCY PARK,
NEW YORK, Jan. 1, 1889.

Happie Newe Yeare! God bless you, darling, and all of you! The thought of your not being

¹ This resulted in my father's founding The Players' Club, which was ready and inaugurated at the close of that same year.



ANTIQUE ROMAN BRASS
LAMP USED IN "RICHELIEU."

well alone marred my full enjoyment of last night's delightful success—the culmination of my professional hopes. I cannot describe the universal joy that pervaded all hearts present, the sympathy expressed, and the entire success of everything—except my speech. I broke down toward the close of it, but it passed off with éclat. Everything else was *perfect*—the clock, with deep cathedral tones tolled twelve in the midst of Barrett's reading of your blessed letter—just in time, as though it had been prearranged. White, the architect, went into ecstasies at the success of everything, and exclaimed, "Even the log burned without smoking," which we feared it would do in the new chimney.

I suspected that Barrett had a poem to read, but the dear letter was a happy surprise, and the wreath and your apt quotation on the card were delightful.¹ You got as much applause as I did. I wired Dr. Parsons of his success. Several were here from Boston. Harry Burnett and Mr. Wendell, Fairchild, and others, were prevented from coming; so was Furness, so was Jefferson, but all sent messages. Barrett and I got to bed about 5 o'clock this A. M., but got little sleep; we both feel wretched in consequence. The papers are full of it, but I've not had a chance yet to read them. Since I rose at 1 o'clock I have been busy packing my things at the hotel to bring here, as we both concluded to pass the balance of the week "at home." When we get *well set*, we will have a "lady's" day for you. My head is now in a whirl, of course. Old Mr. Connor and Murdock, with other old actors, were present. Judge Daly just interrupted me; sends his love, and has ordered his lunch. Several of the best men of New York are here, and it will, no doubt, be the rendezvous of the choicest. Some are in the library reading, and it really seems as if we had been going for years instead of one day. All the exclusive neighbors in this most conservative quarter are pleased instead of offended by the innovation of a club-house in the midst of their respective mansions, as they were at first. All believe, as I do, that this will be of more real benefit to the actor than anything ever done in the world. . . . Only old distinguished actors are "on the free list." . . . The list is overfull, and we must go slowly now, lest we exclude the actors we want. Our list of membership is too small in its limits at present. The walls are filled with pictures, mostly mine,² and my books just filled one section of the cases, which soon will be entirely filled; every day some gift comes. An anonymous lady sent a fine crayon copy of a Shakspeare, and other things come from strangers. The affair has aroused the greatest sympathy for the cause, to my great surprise and delight. This is all I can tell you now, and I am too hurried and nervous to review my letter, so you must guess at what my mistakes mean.

God bless you all a thousand times!

¹ I had sent a wreath of laurel, asking Mr. Barrett to place it upon my father's brow on this great occasion. I attached to the wreath on a card the words, "Hamlet, King, Father."

² Portraits of celebrated actors, and many valuable

I hope you are well again and very happy. I go to Pittsburg from here,—one of the Baltimore weeks, as per printed tour,—then to Baltimore, then Boston. God bless you! Papa.

TO THE SAME.

DETROIT, April 14, 1890.

. . . Yes; it is indeed most gratifying to feel that age has not rendered my work stale and tiresome, as is usually the case with actors (especially tragedians) at my time. Your dear mother's fear was that I would culminate too early, as I seemed then to be advancing so rapidly. Somehow I can't rid myself of the belief that both she and my father helped me. But as for the compensation? Nothing of fame or fortune can compensate for the spiritual suffering that one possessing such qualities has to endure. To pass life in a sort of dream, where "nothing is but what is not,"—a loneliness in the very midst of a constant crowd, as it were,—is not a desirable condition of existence, especially when the body also has to share the "penalty of greatness," as it is termed. Bosh! I'd sooner be an obscure farmer, a hayseed from Wayback, or a cabinet-maker,³ as my father advised, than the most distinguished man on earth. But Nature cast me for the part she found me best fitted for, and I have had to play it, and must play it till the curtain falls. But you must not think me sad about it. No; I am used to it, and am contented.

I continue well, and act with a vigor which sometimes surprises myself, and all the company notice it, and comment upon it. I'm glad the babes had a jolly birthday. Bless 'em! Love for all.

Papa.

TO THE SAME.

"THE PLAYERS," March 22, 1891.

DEAR DAUGHTER: I'm in no mood for letter-writing to-day. The shock,⁴ so sudden and so distressing, and the gloomy, depressing weather, entirely unfit me for the least exertion—even to think. Hosts of friends, all eager to assist poor Mrs. Barrett, seem helpless in confusion, and all the details of the sad business seem to be huddled on her. . . .

General Sherman's son, "Father Tom," as he is affectionately called by all the family and the friends of the dear old general, will attend. He was summoned from Europe recently to his father's deathbed, and he happens to be in time to perform services for his father's friend, poor Lawrence. After the services to-morrow at 10 A. M., the remains and a few friends will go direct to Cohasset for burial Tuesday, where Barrett had only two weeks ago placed his mother; removed from her New York grave to a family lot, which he had recently purchased at Cohasset. He had also enlarged his house there, where he intended to pass his old age in privacy. . . . I have not seen Lawrence since death; when I saw him Thursday he was in a burning fever, and asked me to paintings owned and presented by my father to the club.

3 My father has often related that his father was opposed to his being an actor, and desired him to learn a trade, like cabinet-making.

4 Mr. Lawrence Barrett's death.

keep away for fear his breath might affect me, and it pained him to talk. He pulled through three acts of "De Mauprat" the night before, and sent for his wife that night. His death was very peaceful, with no sign of pain. A couple of weeks ago he and I were to meet General Sherman at dinner: death came instead. To-night Barrett had invited about twenty distinguished men to meet me at Delmonico's, and again the grim guest attends. . . .

My room is like an office of some state official; letters, telegrams, and callers come every moment, some on business, many in sympathy. Three hours have elapsed since I finished the last sentence, and I expect a call from Bromley before I retire. A world of business matters have been disturbed by this sudden break of contracts with actors and managers, and everything pertaining to next season, as well as much concerning the balance of the present one, must be rearranged or canceled. I, of course, am free; but for the sake of the company I shall fulfil my time, to pay their salaries, this week here; and next week in Brooklyn, as they were engaged by Barrett for my engagement. After which they will be out of employment for the balance of the season. . . .

Papa.

TO THE SAME.

NEW YORK, March 15, 1893.

. . . It seems a most difficult task for me to write a simple letter, even to spell. I don't know what is the cause; I certainly am much better than I was, in all respects, until I attempt to write, when all my wits seem to go astray, and my nerves get beyond control. Several days have gone without my having had energy to write more than a telegram to you, which I did also yesterday. If I could take exercise, I believe I should gradually grow stronger. My 'lectric doctors are now reduced to two; I formerly had four a day. After breakfast I take a paper and lie on my sofa in the back room, where I get most sunlight, till about 3:30 or 4 o'clock, when I dine a little, and after go to Carryl's or Bispham's, or to the play, in order to get a vain hope for an interest in the theater. My deafness is so much increased that I don't hear a word that is spoken on the stage. . . . I won't promise any more, but I'll try to finish this badly begun letter in the morning. 'T is quite late now, eight and a half, at least; just my bedtime, and dear old Harry stays with me, to tuck me up, and say

good night, till the last, every night. I miss you all very much, but am glad you escaped this bad weather.

March 16. Good morning, my little ones! Only 't is nearly evening again; the way I let time slip away is a caution to babies. I left this letter to mama last night, meaning to finish it for her this morning: but 't is now nearly to-morrow evening ahead, and I'm just about awake, and have only just scratched a few lines addressed to my good little "Babes in the Woods" way down South, where 't is nice and warm, amongst the birds and flowers. Here 't is just as cold as winter still. I'm really cold and shivering while I try to write. . . . I hope you are still all well. If you are always as good as you are now, and have been this summer, I'm sure the good angels will take good guard of you, and bring you all to our happy home in New York, to see grandpa, who is anxious to see his old babies again. Now, you see, I've managed to write two letters for you (you and mama in one, you see). That's for waiting so long. . . .

TO THE SAME.

"THE PLAYERS," NEW YORK,
Tuesday, 4:30 P. M., April 17, 1893.

DEAR DAUGHTER: I rose very late this morning, and brought with me an all-night and permanent headache, which still sways me after a long nap on the sofa till just now; I hope to get rid of it, and be soon with you for a while this evening. Will send for coupé; am sorry that I did not send word earlier. Very sorry your cold is worse, but am glad that you take care of it, and have stayed in-doors, for it seems quite cold here.

If I should not get out, don't worry; I am quite well, except my stupid headache, that will perhaps keep me in the house. Nothing worse. I hope 't is better with you, and nothing worse with you all.

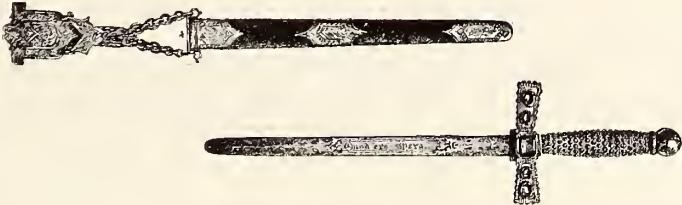
God bless you!

Papa.

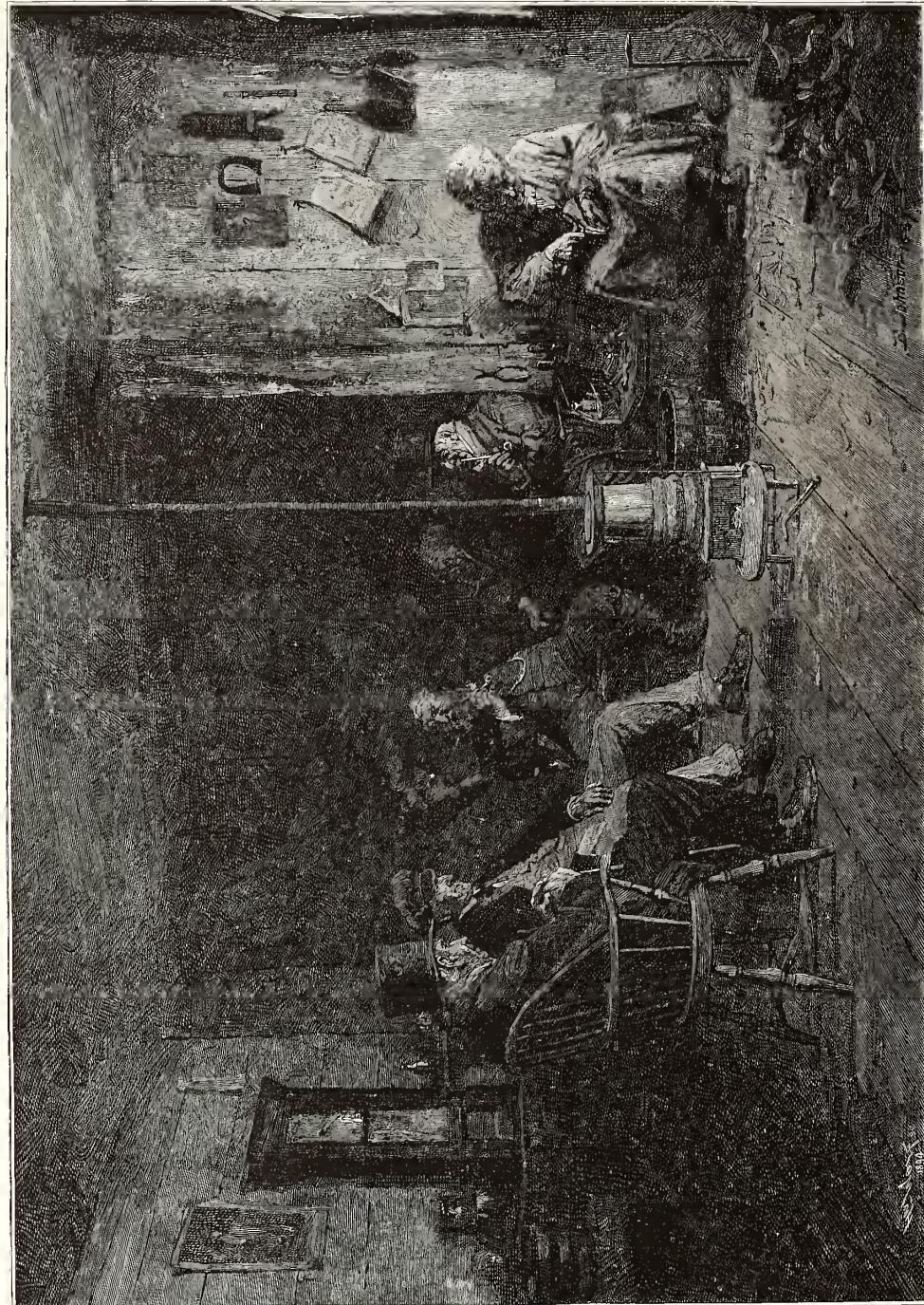
The above is my father's last letter to me; on the following morning he was taken ill (Wednesday, April 18).

On the previous evening he came to my house, as usual, to dinner, and although very feeble, he seemed bright, and spoke of his pleasure in still being able to come to us.

Edwina Booth Grossmann.



DAGGER AND SHEATH WORN BY BOOTH IN "HAMLET." HANOLE STUDDED WITH BOHEMIAN GARNETS AND TOPAZES; STEEL BLADE ENGRAVED ON ONE SIDE WITH THE BOOTH MOTTO, "QUOD EKO SPERO"; ON REVERSE WITH HIS NAME AND DATE, "EDWIN BOOTH, 1866."



PAINTED BY EASTMAN JOHNSON,

SEE "OPEN LETTERS."

COPYRIGHT, 1883, BY E. D. ADAMS.

ENGRAVED BY HENRY WOLF.

THE NANTUCKET SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

1860. Since that time octavo sheets have been the commonest form with quarto still used for business communications.

There is something very impressive about the old folio letters. They were written out with great care and were copied from drafts. It was a point of honor not to send a letter with many corrections, it being considered a matter of disrespect to the receiver. If time was lacking to make a clean copy, the writer apologized for any slips in the letter. In German and British documents the beginning is made with many ornamental pen flourishes, and sometimes even portraits are included in the initial letters. French documents of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods are very handsome with vignettes, patriotic quotations, sealing wax seals, and other devices.

As to kinds of manuscripts collected, the finest are the originals of important historical documents, like the Declaration of Independence, and original manuscripts of great authors and musicians. These are, of course, very expensive and are found in the archives of Governments, or in the libraries of men like J. Pierpont Morgan or H. H. Huntington. There are also several smaller collections by other rich men. The most important dealers in this line are Gabriel Wells and Dr. A. S. Rosenbach, both of New York.

Next in quality are full autograph letters, sometimes called holograph letters. This means letters all written and signed by the celebrity. These letters require a salutation at the beginning, "Dear Sir," or "Esteemed Friend," and close with "your obedient servant," etc. Sometimes, 200 or 300 years ago, the writers wrote their name at the beginning. As a rule the letters must be signed with full surname though I understand that initials are considered almost equally good in Europe. This is not the case in the United States.

After full autograph letters in value come ADS or autograph documents signed. These are apt to be official and are sometimes of historical importance. Next to them are LS, or letters written or

typed by a secretary and signed by the celebrity. Again, after LS are DS or documents signed. They are written, typed, or printed, and are usually diplomas, commissions, deeds, etc. Some officials are particular in signing their full names to such papers. Lincoln always signed his letters "A. Lincoln" and his commissions, "Abraham Lincoln."

The ALS are the dearest and the DS the cheapest, but contents may change value entirely, and very often a historical LS is much more valuable than an unimportant ALS of the same man.

EDWIN BOOTH

To Anna Cora Ritchie.

My dear Madam,

You must forgive me for not replying to your letter earlier. My health being poorly, I have felt little like doing anything. I remember having met Mrs. Basson at Dr. Beales last fall, and also recollect saying yes to a request she made about a benefit, but never expecting to see the lady again, courtesy alone prompted me to acquiesce, for you know, professionally, what an unpleasant fix it is to have to break the run of an engagement to play for benefits. The manager objects on the grounds that she holds no position and is not a favorite. I object as it is a bad precedent. I made a rule not to play for benefits except for a few of my particular friends, and even that has done me no good. Don't think me selfish—I am not—I speak in a business point of view. I have three applicants here for the same thing—the divorced wife of my brother, who thinks I should do something to assist one who led my brother such a happy life, the lawyer says I ought to give the firemen a benefit, and lastly the lady in question. You say she deserves some kindness at the hands of my sex. I'm sorry she has received so many worrys therefrom, but I fancy she is of a forgiving disposition, as I perceive the lady is now a Mrs. somebody else—I forget the name. I

might balance her accounts with a similar complaint—the many favors I have received from her sex have not had a tendency to make me tender-hearted towards them, however, that's not to the point. I seriously would like to serve the lady, for I rather like her—for a wonder—for I seldom like those I meet in the profession, but I think you will acknowledge my position to be an unpleasant one. I don't think it would aid her in the least, for I am doing a poor business, and if the folks wont turn out to see me for my sake, 'tis sure they wouldn't for hers. She may have a large circle of friends, but they never come to benefits, besides if they did they couldn't fill the house, and unless she held a position, it were folly to attempt anything of the kind. I'm afraid you'll think me rather curt, perhaps rudely so, but I don't mean it. I am of but few words and, as I fancy you struggling through this labyrinth of hieroglyphics, I hear you say "the fewer the better." I also had a letter from Avonia but 't'was from Aspinwall. I shall be in Richmond in a few weeks.

Your servt.

EDWIN BOOTH

FOR SALE

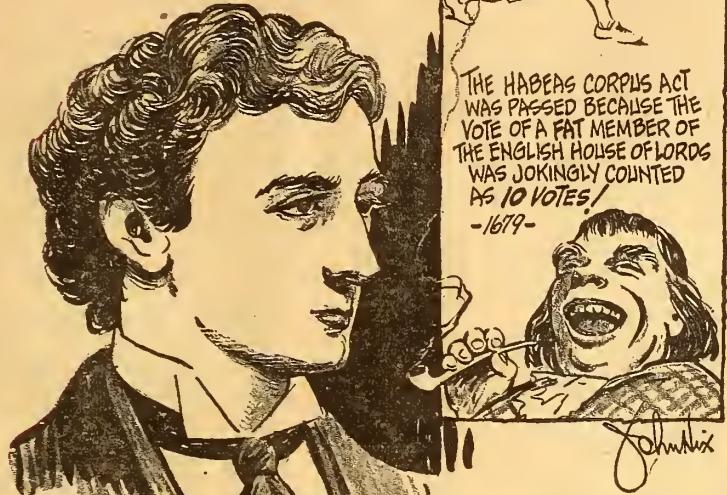
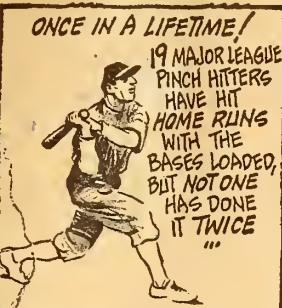
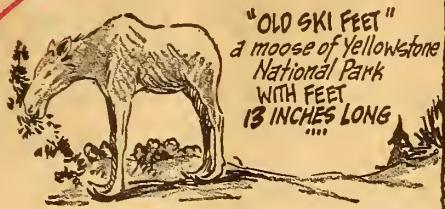
Many people think the letters and documents listed here are facsimiles or copies of originals. I guarantee them to be, in every case, the originals as they came from the hands of the writers.

ALS, Autograph Letter Signed; ADS, Autograph Document Signed; ANS, Autograph Note Signed; DS, Document Signed; LS, Letter Signed; 4to, Quarto; 8vo, Octavo; 12mo, Duo-decimo; Fol, Folio; 2pp., Two pages.

28080 TOMPKINS, Charles H. Brigadier-General in Union Army. LS, 4to, 1863. \$1.00
 28081 TORBERT, A. T. A. Major-General in Union Army. ADS, double fol, 1858. \$1.00
 28082 ——. ALS, 8vo, Paris, 1874. \$1.50
 28083 TOTTEN, Joseph G. Major-General in Union Army. ALS, 2pp, 4to, 1843. \$1.00

28084 ——. LS, 8vo, 1846. \$.50
 28085 TOWNSEND, E. D. Major-General in Union Army. ALS, 8vo, 1863. \$1.00
 28086 ——. LS, 4to, 1860. \$.50
 28087 TROBRIAND, Regis de. Major-General in Union Army. DS, 4to, 1863. \$1.00
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 28089 TYNDALE, Hector. Major-General in Union Army. DS, 4to, 1863. \$1.00
 28090 UGALDE, Delphine V. French singer. ALS, 8vo. \$.50
 28091 URSPRUCH, Anton. German composer. ALS, 4pp, 8vo, 1890. \$.75
 28092 VALDA, Julia. Singer. ALS, 8vo, 1814. \$1.00
 28093 VANBRUGH, Irene. British actress. ALS, 8vo. \$.75
 28094 VANDERBILT, Jerome. Shoe dealer. ADS, 4to, N. Y., 1774. His bill against David Van Horne for shoes. \$1.00
 28095 VAN DER VERE, Cornelius. DS, fol, 1764. Deed of land in Flatbush to Jacob Leferts. Also signed by Gerrit Kouwenhoven and Jacobus Van der Veer. \$2.00
 28096 VAN HORNE, David. Old N. Y. merchant. DS, 3pp, fol, 1758. Also signed by Evert Bancker and others. The privateers Neptune and General Johnson had captured the French vessel Sainte Marie and brought her into N. Y., where she was condemned as a prize. This is a bond on appeal from the judgment of the Court. It bears the rare N. Y. impressed stamp. \$5.00
 28097 VAN HORNE, Garret. N. Y. merchant. DS, fol, 1759. Also signed by Augustus and Cornelius C. Van Horne, and John Burnet. Deed of house and lot in Queen Street facing the East River. \$5.00
 28098 VAN ROOY, Anton. Grand opera singer. ALS, 8vo, 1904. \$1.00
 28099 VASSIEUR, Leon. French composer. ALS, 8vo. \$.50
 28100 VERLET, Alice. Singer. ALS, 8vo. \$.50
 28101 VIANNA DA MORTA, H. Singer. ALS, 2pp, 8vo, 1909. \$.50
 28102 VIZENTINI, A. French composer. ALS, 8vo. \$.50
 28103 VIVIER, E. French composer. ALS, 8vo. \$.50

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS By John Hix



EDWIN BOOTH, THE BROTHER OF LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN, VOTED ONLY ONCE IN HIS LIFE -- AND THAT WAS FOR ABRAHAM LINCOLN!

EDWIN BOOTH . . .

"I voted for Lincoln the other day -- the first vote I ever cast," were the words written to a friend, Miss F. Carry, by Edwin Booth one day in 1864, shortly after Lincoln's re-election to the Presidency. The brother of John Wilkes Booth, the man who shot Lincoln, never voted again.

About the best-loved and greatest American actor of his day, Edwin Booth was severely shocked by his brother's horrible crime. For a year after the assassination, he remained in strict seclusion, then returned to the stage to find that his popularity had not suffered in the least. Never again did he appear on a Washington, D. C., stage, however.

In 1867, Booth obtained permission from President Johnson to have his brother's body removed from under the flagstones of a Washington arsenal where it had been buried and with great secrecy had the remains transported to Baltimore where it

was interred in the family burial ground.

PASSED IN A JEST . . .

Habeas Corpus, the law compelling authorities to show legal reason for holding a person prisoner, is considered one of the most important pieces of legislation ever passed in English history. Here is the strange story of its enactment by the English House of Lords, 1679, as told by Bishop Burnet, noted clergyman and historian of the time.

"Lords Gray and Norreys were named to be tellers. Lord Norreys being a man subject to vapors, was not at all attentive, so, a very fat lord coming in, Lord Gray counted him for 10, as a jest at first but seeing Lord Norreys had not observed it, he went on with this mis-reckoning of 10, so it was reported the House had declared that they who were for the bill were the majority, though indeed it went to the other side."

Mad Booths Subjects At Municipal Museum

AN exhibition of photographs from the collection of Stanley Preston Kimmel, author of "The Mad Booths of Maryland," will go on view Tuesday at the Municipal Museum, on North Holliday street, and will give Baltimoreans a close-up of some of the most famous figures in the history of the American theater in addition to illuminating still further the story of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Through the exhibition it will be possible to trace the tempestuous career of the Booth family from the time the first Junius Brutus Booth projected his personality across the footlights in London to the final eclipse. No picture is available of Mary Christine Adelaide Delannoy, his first wife, who is buried in Baltimore's New Cathedral Cemetery, but there will be a charming likeness of Mary Ann Holmes Booth, his second spouse.

Census Photograph

One panel will contain a photograph of a significant excerpt from the Baltimore census of 1850 which seems to settle once and for all the moot question of the birthplace of Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., by showing that he was born in South Carolina and not in Maryland as generally has been supposed.

The only known picture extant of Dr. Joseph Adrian Booth, youngest child of Junius Brutus and brother of John Wilkes Booth, will also be on view, having been identified by Mr. Kimmel from a picture in the archives of the War Department, where, since the Civil War, it had been erroneously regarded as a picture of David E. Herold, the man who guided John Wilkes Booth out of Washington on the night Lincoln was assassinated.

Like a Salvation Army lassie was Rosalie, eldest daughter of Junius Brutus Booth, revealed in a photostat of a drawing used to illustrate an article on the Booth family which Mr. Kimmel uncovered in an old scrapbook at the Municipal Museum while he was digging for treasure on the Booth family several years ago in Baltimore.

Other Reproductions

Pictures which the War Department has preserved of Edwin and Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., will recall the

feverish excitement which followed the assassination of President Lincoln and the story of the latter's trip to Washington from Philadelphia, reading the Bible all the way. Both Mary Devlin and "Mad Mary McVicker," the first and second wife of Edwin Booth, will suggest the influence exerted by these two women on one of the greatest Shakespearean actors the world has known. Pictures of the Richmond theater in which Mary Devlin was playing at the time she and Edwin Booth met, and of the hotel where John Wilkes Booth lived while he was an obscure member of a stock company (playing under the name of John Wilkes because he felt himself unworthy to use the great name which was his by right of birth) will italicize this phase of their hectic careers.

Mad Mary McVicker

"Mad Mary McVicker" is shown in the feminine mufti of the early eighties, and it is possible that those who know the story of her tragedy will be able to read into the photograph the reasons why Edwin Booth had to nurse her through twelve years of unhappiness.

Other photographs in the exhibition will recall the little-known story of Edwin Booth's early days in California. One will show the set on the stage at Ford's Theater in Washington on the night that President Lincoln was assassinated, and a War Department photograph will depict John Wilkes Booth and three unidentified companions during the Civil War. A photostatic copy of one of John Wilkes Booth's letters to John T. Ford, manager of the theater where Lincoln was shot, and one of the diary found on his person while he was dying at the Garrett farm in Virginia, will add to the vividness of a story which never grows old.

Pictures In Pocket

Some of the pictures found in the assassin's pockets after his arrest also will be shown. Of the five, four easily were identified as those of well-known actresses of the day. The fifth eluded identification until Mr. Kimmel, after intensive research, succeeded in verifying it as the portrait of Bessie Hale, daughter of a United States Senator, to whom John Wilkes Booth was engaged to be married. Publication of



John Wilkes Booth. From a picture preserved in the files of the War Department, which will be included in the exhibition opening Tuesday at the Municipal Museum

History Records Ironic Note

One Booth Saved a Lincoln's Life

By DON OAKLEY

Newspaper Enterprise Association

History books record that an actor named Booth shot to death a man named Lincoln.

Few history books, however, mention the fact that an actor named Booth once saved the life of a man named Lincoln.

The first instance, of course, was John Wilkes Booth's assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in Ford's Theater in Washington. The other, which occurred shortly before this, involved Booth's older brother, Edwin, and Lincoln's son, Robert.

In 1865, Edwin Booth at 31 was the outstanding Shakespearean performer of his day. President Lincoln himself once watched him play Shylock at Ford's Theater, remarking that he would rather have read the play at home but went only to see the great actor.

Name Renowned

The name Booth, in fact, had dominated the American stage for decades. It began with Junius Brutus Booth, who came from England, and who had three actor sons, Junius Brutus Jr., Edwin and John Wilkes.

John, the youngest, was the favorite of the South, to which he was fanatically devoted—even more than to his dream of eclipsing his brother's fame.

In November 1864, the three brothers had appeared together for the first and only time in Shakespeare's Junius Caesar at the Winter Garden in New York. Immediately after this, Edwin Booth had opened in Hamlet, and in March 1865 was completing a record run of 100 performances. The city of New York was preparing to present him with a gold medal.

Lincoln Lost Balance

It was about this time that business took Booth to Philadelphia. At the railroad station platform in Jersey City, a jostling crowd was buying tickets from the conductor. Booth saw a young man, pushed by the crowd, lose his balance and slip from the platform just as the train began to move. Booth dropped his luggage, grabbed the man by his coat collar and pulled him back from probable death.

The grateful young man was Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's eldest son. He was 22, recently graduated from Harvard and soon to take up duties as a captain on General Grant's staff. Grant, learning of the episode

later, offered to do Booth any favor he could.

On April 14, 1865, the fourth anniversary of the fall of Fort Sumter, the nation was stunned anew by the murder of the President. Embittering the common grief was a hatred of the assassin that engulfed the entire Booth family.

Theater Closed

In Boston, the theater in which Edwin Booth was appearing was forced to close. Booth had to undergo a baggage search be-

fore he was allowed to leave the city.

In Philadelphia, a U.S. marshal placed a sister, Asia Booth Clarke, under house arrest and her husband was jailed.

In Cincinnati, Junius Booth narrowly escaped from a lynch mob, was arrested and taken to Washington where he was imprisoned for a time.

In New York, the mother of the Booths prayed that her son, John Wilkes, would not live to be hanged.

Lincoln's death brought out the best and worst in human nature. Stories of his funeral ran side by side with lurid "exposes" on the Booths. Old family scandals were dug up and new ones invented.

Clung to Memory

Edwin Booth swore he would never appear on the stage again. In the following months he clung to the memory of his encounter with Robert Lincoln, as one rock in a sea of madness.

The assassination reacted against the whole acting pro-

fession, which was still considered something less than respectable. Preachers lamented the fact that Lincoln should meet his Maker in, of all places, a theater—one of those temples of folly, lewdness and infamy.

Stagehands and members of the cast at Ford's Theater were suspected of complicity in the crime and were either arrested or required to report daily to the police.

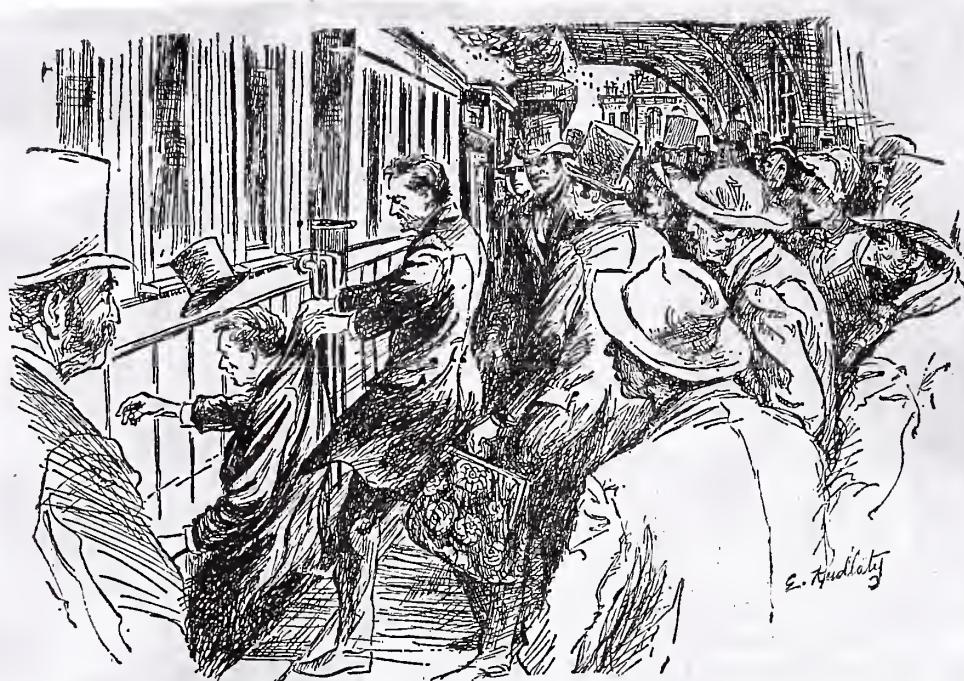
Financial need forced Edwin Booth to forget his vow. In 1866 he returned to the stage as Hamlet in New York. On the night of the play, the theater was jammed by would-be ticket buyers. Extra police stood by apprehensively.

Got Standing Ovation

But when the curtain rose, Booth received a standing ovation. The public trial of the Booth family was over; the verdict was acquittal. A year later, Booth received his postponed gold medal from the city.

Booth wrote to Grant, who had become Secretary of War, reminding him of his promise of a favor and requesting that his mother be permitted to claim the remains of her son. Grant did not reply. Not until 1869 was John Wilkes Booth allowed to be buried in the family plot in Baltimore.

Edwin Booth died in 1893. As a final, tragic coincidence, on the day of his funeral in New York, three floors of the old Ford Theater in Washington, converted into government offices, collapsed, killing 22 persons.



JERSEY CITY INCIDENT—Actor Edwin Booth grabbed a young man back from possible death when crowds jostled him, causing him to lose his balance and slip from the platform. The young man was Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's eldest son.

But as for Lincoln, here's a stunner that's new to me: Mrs. J. I. Johnson, of Washington, D. C., writes that several years before the mad **John Wilkes Booth** assassinated Lincoln at Ford's Theater, young **Robert Todd Lincoln** was standing on the railroad platform in Jersey City, N. J., and was accidentally jostled off by a crowd of passengers. Robert would certainly have been killed by the onrushing train if he had not been yanked back to safety by a tall, handsome man who was none other than **Edwin Booth**, the celebrated brother of John Booth. I'm not kidding you — there's documentary proof!



BOOTH
He saved a Lincoln

Milton Geiger

9515 Vanalder Avenue
Northridge, California 91324

July 18, 1969

Director, Lincoln Library
Lincoln Life Insurance Company
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Sir:

I have in my possession several items relating closely to Edwin Booth and his immediate family. The Booth role in history pertaining to Lincoln may make this material relevant to your collection.

This material has been entrusted to me by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cutting of this city. Mrs. Cutting is Edwina Booth, great grand-daughter of Edwin Booth; that is, she is the daughter of Mildred Booth Grossman (Crossman) who in turn was one of the two children of Edwina Booth, Edwin's only child.

Mrs. Cutting has had these objects in her possession for some time. She has now asked me to make contact with persons and groups who might be interested in adding some of this material to collections of Boothiana. Perhaps I have this favored - and to me honored position by virtue of being the author of the play "Edwin Booth" which appeared with José Ferrer on Broadway some years ago and is now performed throughout the country chiefly in colleges. Mrs. Cutting feels I have a certain affinity for Booth, as indeed I have.

In any case, I have this material. Some of it is self-documenting, like the programs and the diary of Junius Brutus Booth 1810-1815 period. Other of the material, like so much such material, must achieve its documentation circumstantially and by strong inference.

The material is fairly extensive though depleted now, and runs from documents and jewelry to furniture and baroque art.

I will list a few of these items by way of example:

An amethyst brooch shaped as a heart, made into a pendant but otherwise unchanged from the original condition in which Edwin Booth gave it to his wife, Mary Devlin. The jeweler's description has it as being amethyst, $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch across, crowned with five diamonds of approximately 0.20 carats each and framed by 45 diamonds of approximately 0.06 carats each. This is a most beautiful piece of high intrinsic value let alone its historic value.

One necklace of 19 large, graduated, smooth oval amber beads attributed to Edwin Booth as far back as his childhood.

One necklace of 21 cut topaz beads.

One gold watch chain, Booth's.

Several of his scarf pins, intrinsic value negligible.

A necklace of eight cut topazes and nine small emeralds and enamel on simulated gold, plus bracelet to match with five topazes, attributed to Mary Devlin, gift of Booth.

Necklace of 72 jade beads of uncertain intrinsic value - much of this material has not been appraised as yet.

Mahogany cigar box used by Booth.

Larger cigar box, wood and filigree metal.

Memoirs of Junius Brutus Booth period 1810-1815 in Booth's own hand and in excellent condition.

Edwin Booth's blotting roller, ivory handle.

Gold automatic pencil with hook for attachment to watch chain. Booth is seen wearing such pencils in many portraits.

Several Booth calling cards with instructions to theater managers to admit bearers to performances - over Booth's signature.

Season pass to Booth's Theater signed by Edwin Booth.

Booth's silver postage stamp box.

Booth's own baby fork which he later gave to Edwina on her marriage to Grossman, and at which time 'G' was added to the Booth monogram.

Small framed picture of Booth in 4 inch baroque frame on easel attributed to Mary Evlin.

Baroque statue converted to electricity, statue by L. & F. Moreau: 2 female figures, one carrying laurel wreath, other winged, carrying in left arm tablet with the inscription: "Le genie a pour son domaine l'immortalité". Possibly of dubious artistic merit and cast in a lesser metal to appear like bronze, but was part of Booth's latter-day furnishings. On substantial walnut pedestal.

A baroque lamp base formerly at The Players Club and removed when it was remodeled, arriving circuitously at Edwina Booth Cutting's. Has masks of comedy and drama in base and the stylized gryffons characteristic of the Booth crest.

There are several other items either directly related to Booth or familial once or twice removed. (Like a baby cup in sterling which Edwina thinks was Edwin's and which he gave to one of Edwina's children with a Hungarian inscription added (Grossman was Hungarian) in 1886)

There are some large photographs of Booth and one of Booth and Barrett together, originals and the second may be a rarity if not unique. Signatures of Booth and Barrett go with the latter.

There is a program complete with the text of the play from the 100th. of the famous, record setting 100 nights of Hamlet which Booth played. Not too many of these can remain in existence.

If you are interested in any of these items or the others not possible to list I should be glad to hear from you and perhaps some one representing you may examine the material and decide to what extent your interest may go.

Very truly yours,
Milton Geiger
Milton Geiger

Booth file

July 22, 1969

Mr. Milton Geiger
9515 Vanalden Avenue
Northridge, California 91324

Dear Mr. Geiger:

I was glad to have your letter of July 18th listing for sale the different items of the Edwin Booth collection. This collection, as you describe it, is most interesting. However, it hardly fits into our needs for a Lincoln Museum-Library even though Edwin did have a younger brother named John Wilkes.

We will not be in the market for the items you describe, however I do hope that you find an enthusiastic purchaser who will undoubtedly cherish the items you have for sale. It appears to me that your best bet for a sale would be some wealthy person connected with the Theatre rather than an historical collection dealing with Abraham Lincoln.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM/cvrw



(Duplicate)

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Edwin Booth in Terre Haute
Historic Henry County



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Pamela J. Bennett, Editor

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EDWIN BOOTH
IN TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA,
APRIL, 1873

By John Hanners*

In the early 1870s Terre Haute, Indiana, was a prosperous community of nearly 10,000 people. It had a bustling economy based on the pork industry and was served by the Terre Haute-Indianapolis Railroad, the Wabash River, and the National Road. Other industries included brick factories, distilleries, and the river trade. More often than not, however, civic pride was directed toward the cultural and artistic accomplishments of the town rather than its commercial and industrial achievements. Its emerging cultural consciousness was, in this respect, typical of many midwestern towns in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Historian Neil Harris has noted:

The factor bringing all these [towns] under one heading in this period was the zeal of residents in publicizing their home cities as places deserving outside respect (and patronage) because of their cultural amenities. Literary societies and academies were advantages alongside convenient railroad lines and fine harbors. Guidebooks and newspapers . . . presented their panoply of institutions as proof of urbanity and wealth.¹

Terre Haute was no exception. The 1868-1869 City Directory praised the town's "excellent churches, academies, and our cultural fineries."² But, according to local newspapers of the period, one institution was missing among the "cultural fineries" — an opulent opera house like those already existing in Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. The press had said for years that Dowling Hall, Terre Haute's one theatre, was fine, but something more was needed to attract the big stars of the day.

In 1870 that need was fulfilled with the completion of the Grand Opera House. Situated on the northeast corner of Fourth Street and Wabash Avenue, the Grand was financed by several local businessmen and designed by architect J. A. Vrydaghs. Its interior murals were painted by Robert Buckels, an English artist who was later knighted by Queen Victoria. The original cost estimate was \$60,000, but the eventual amount spent was slightly over \$178,000.³

The theatre opened on December 19, 1870, with a production of *Everybody's Friend*, starring John E. Owens, a veteran New York and Boston comedian.⁴ The next day the Indianapolis *Journal* remarked, "Suffice it now to say, that it is first-class in all respects, both as to constructions and appointments, ranking it with the best public halls in the West—or, indeed, the country anywhere."⁵

By its third season, 1872-1873, the Grand Opera House became what Terre Hauteans had envisioned—a showcase for the most prominent theatrical stars and personalities of the day. Laura Keene, Dan Rice, Lotta Crabtree, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, Mrs. G. C. Howard (of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* fame), and Bidwell and MacDonough's production of *The Black Crook* all took the stage at the Grand during that 1872-1873 season. But the premier attraction, the one that caused the greatest excitement, was Edwin Booth, the man looked upon by his contemporaries as the greatest living American actor.

Booth's 1873 midwestern tour was born of desperation. His Booth's Theatre in New York was in deep financial trouble, its profits since its opening in 1869 were reportedly high, but Booth's liabilities were staggering. By January, 1873, Booth had debts totaling well over \$300,000. After deliberation, he persuaded his brother Junius to take over the theatre temporarily, apparently in the hopes that this release from managerial responsibilities would free him to undertake a whirlwind tour of undetermined length to pay off the huge debt.⁶



Terre Haute Grand Opera House, c. 1873 - Courtesy, Audio-Visual Center, Indiana State University.



Edwin Booth, photograph by Sarony. Courtesy Harvard Theatre Collection.

Booth had personal problems as well. His second wife, Mary McVicker Booth, was seriously ill. Never a strong woman, she suffered a difficult pregnancy during their first year of marriage. Her nerves were shattered by the experience, and her health steadily declined. In the winter of 1872-1873 she suffered a relapse.⁷

Veteran actor Otis Skinner related a strange incident involving Booth during this period, and the affair provides a measure of insight into the state of the actor's mind prior to his Terre Haute appearance. Garrie Davidson, who did odd jobs around Booth's Theatre, told Skinner that in February or March of 1873, Booth gave him orders to be awakened at three o'clock in the morning. Early the next day, after Davidson had done as he was told, Booth led him downstairs to the furnace room below the Booth Theatre stage. He gave directions to Davidson to stoke the furnace while he, Booth, opened a large trunk with an ax. Inside the trunk were several

tightly-packed costumes. Booth took out the costumes one by one and, after carefully inspecting each article, handed it over to Davidson with instructions to burn it. There in the early morning, with the eerie glow of the furnace around them, Davidson recognized the owners of the costumes by their initials. They belonged to Booth's father, Junius Brutus, Sr., and his brother, John Wilkes.⁸

A failing theatre, a sickly wife, and lingering memories of a tragic family background—Booth must have begun his 1873 enterprise in a depressed state. In early February, he launched his tour with an extended run at his father-in-law's theatre, McVicker's, in Chicago. More trouble soon followed when his supporting company was struck by illness. In a letter dated March 2, six weeks prior to his Terre Haute appearance, Booth wrote his daughter, "Poor Mr. Joyce died soon after Mr. Fenno's death. Nearly all my company have been ill this season."⁹

On April 10, 1873, Booth, beset by personal problems and accompanied by a less than healthy company, arrived in Terre Haute from Lafayette.¹⁰ The Terre Haute *Evening Mail* carried a small notice on April 8 that read: "The next great event in the line of amusements will be the appearance of Edwin Booth on the 10th of April." On April 10, the following advertisement appeared in the *Daily Express*.¹¹

TWO NIGHTS ONLY
April 10th and 14th

Under the management of Mr. J. H. McVicker,
Manager of McVicker's Theatre in Chicago

Thursday Evening, April 10th
The Eminent Actor, Mr.

Edwin Booth

In his great Shakespearean character of
HAMLET

Monday Evening, April 14
As the Cardinal, in Bulwer's great historical
play of
RICHELIEU

Supported by a full Dramatic company selected from Booth's Theatre, New York, and McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, and present with the same Costumes, Properties, and Appointments as used during the great run of the pieces at Booth's Theatre, New York.

\$1.50 First row, front family circle
1.00 Family Circle
.50 Gallery



Edwin Booth as Hamlet. Courtesy *Harvard Theatre Collection*.

Several groups from the surrounding area came by rail to watch the performance of *Hamlet*. The towns of Greencastle, Sullivan, Brazil, and Paris, Illinois, all sent official delegations. On April 11, the Terre Haute House, the leading hotel in town, announced that it had served supper to 198 people in addition to the "regular" list.¹²

Hamlet was enthusiastically received and the newspaper reviews and comments on the production reveal the prevailing theatrical tastes of the period. The editor of the *Evening Gazette* commented:¹³

Mr. Booth's rendition of this singular character of Shakespeare's wonderful creation, certainly more nearly approximates perfection than that of any other actor. From the time he appears on stage, his fine form and the grace of his actions are firmly fixed in the minds of those of his auditors who can appreciate the highest histrionic talent. His support was better than the average of traveling companies.

Not everyone agreed that the company was "better than average." The *Evening Mail* noted that, "Edwin Booth is so grand an artist that he draws immense houses, despite the hindrance of a weak company and the much more serious drawback of an inefficient manager."¹⁴ The *Evening Mail* was probably correct in its estimation of the supporting company. Booth was often criticized for tolerating poor actors around him because he realized that audiences came to see him, not the other players.¹⁵ The charge is tempered by the fact that nearly all the prominent actors of the period were accused of the same thing; it was the age of the star in the American theatre.

The rest of the critics in Terre Haute were fulsome in their praise of *Hamlet* and highly respectful in their criticisms. One reviewer did not even feel the necessity of commenting on the play. "His rendition of the familiar role of Hamlet was witnessed with intense delight. So many thousand descriptions of Booth's Hamlet have been written that the subject may be considered exhausted."¹⁶ Other critics were as reluctant.¹⁷

Without unnecessary blowing and no extra amount of advertising, Edwin Booth attracted at the Opera House on Thursday evening one of the finest audiences ever assembled in that building. Every seat was filled from the orchestra to the upper gallery with many gentlemen standing against the walls. This is real fame! Of Booth's Hamlet—We should as soon think of painting a rainbow as to describe it. So perfect in every word, every gesture, every movement. In this impersonation he has no equal on the American stage.

A woman correspondent from Paris, Illinois, saw Booth from a distinctly romantic point of view and her criticism concerned the feminine aspects of Hamlet's character.¹⁸

It needs no art to make Booth look Hamlet. The high forehead crowned with long black hair; the magnificent rolling eyes, the tender mouth, sensitive in its play as a woman's, the lithe, sinewy form, full of infinite grace, are essentially the property of Hamlet. Woe betide the men if those eyes were in a woman's head, and she possessed the same powers, for her victims would number in the thousands. When he weeps, he uses his handkerchief drying his face as a woman does. Then he dies as a woman dies—not with the strong agony of a man; simply the throwing back of the head, with one or two convulsive gasps, a slight quivering of the limbs, and the white face is set.

It is a wonder the critics could see or hear the production if the following is any indication of the prevailing atmosphere during the performance. It is obvious Terre Haute was not far removed from its frontier days, and audiences exhibited unruly behavior. An angry patron wrote the *Evening Gazette*: "There are some people at the Opera House last evening who failed to see anything to admire

except the witticisms put into the mouth of the old gravedigger. While they could not enjoy the entertainment, they seemed determined that those who could, should not, and so they whispered and laughed and rustled programs during the performance."¹⁹ Others were equally disgruntled. "N.B.R." complained:²⁰

The Terre Haute audience, as they always do when they have anything really fine at the Opera House, waited to array themselves finely and kept coming in all during the first and second act, to the great annoyance of those who were there to see the play; as if they fully expected someone to look at *them*, when Booth was playing Hamlet on the stage before them. At the close, before Hamlet was fairly dead, or the curtain had fallen, they rose up *en masse* and started from the house.

Booth and his company left for Evansville on Saturday, April 12. During his absence, the *Express* found it necessary to print a public apology. Earlier in the week the *Express* had noted that "McVickers [sic] of McVicker's in Chicago, is managing Booth on his proximal tour." An embarrassed editor explained, "Edwin Booth was astonished yesterday to find himself on a 'proximal' tour, sent there by a fastidious printer who didn't like the word provincial."²¹ Apparently no city with a magnificent opera house and a visiting star the magnitude of Edwin Booth could be considered, in any form of the word, "provincial."

Booth returned to the Grand Opera House on April 14, a Monday, for the performance of Lord Bulwer Lytton's *Richelieu*. The editor of the *Saturday Evening Mail* complained that on the Saturday before *Richelieu* he had to wait an hour in the lobby of the Grand to buy his ticket.²² Booth had a "fine" audience, but its size was small compared to the one for *Hamlet*.²³ The reception for *Richelieu* provided an interesting contrast to the excitement surrounding *Hamlet*. *Richelieu* drew only three short comments in the Terre Haute newspapers, and there were no reviews. Three reasons might account for this apparent disinterest in *Richelieu*: (1) the audience was small because heavy rains had fallen during the previous week-end,²⁴ (2) the audience had seen Booth in *Hamlet*, and in doing so, satisfied their desire to see the great actor; (3) the performance date, April 14, was the anniversary of Lincoln's assassination by Edwin's brother, John Wilkes Booth.

Heavy rails fell during the week-end after *Hamlet* and before *Richelieu*. The Wabash River rose so quickly that city officials feared it would flood and contaminate the water works building located hard by the river bank.²⁵ But if the week-end downpour was responsible for the small turn-out, why did the editor of the *Saturday Evening Mail* complain about the long wait for his ticket on Saturday morning? "The sale of seats," he commented, "indicate [sic] another grand ovation awaits him."²⁶ That Saturday night two theatrical events took place in Terre Haute in spite of the inclement weather.

At the Opera House the Sappho Opera Company played to a full house,²⁷ and several hundred people attended a circus performance.²⁸ Ticket sales were brisk for *Richelieu*, people turned out to see other amusements, and yet the audience was small for Booth's second appearance.

Delegations from various western Indiana and eastern Illinois communities had come to see *Hamlet*; that task completed they returned to their hometowns. Some of the Terre Hauteans, if the audience behavior is any indication, were at the *Hamlet* performance for its social novelty. Even taking into account the absence of these novelty-seekers on the night of *Richelieu*, it seems reasonable to assume that enough interested patrons were left in the city to provide the Grand with a full house on Booth's second night.

The third reason is the more intriguing: April 14, 1873, the date of the *Richelieu* performance, was the eighth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's assassination by John Wilkes Booth. Indiana had played a prominent role in securing Lincoln's nomination for the presidency in 1860.²⁹ Terre Haute herself took pride in Lincoln's Indiana childhood and vigorously supported him during the presidential campaigns of 1860 and 1864. Also her citizens paid an unusually high price during the Civil War; fully one fifth of the town's population, 2,003 men, served in the northern armies, and the casualty rate was high. As late as 1891, 228 of 500 surviving Terre Haute veterans were permanently disabled.³⁰

There was also an established link between owners and editors of Terre Haute newspapers and Lincoln. Major General Charles Cruft, a prominent Civil War veteran and owner of the *Express* until April of 1872, was a friend of Lincoln's. Colonel R. N. Hudson, owner and editor of the *Express* in 1873, and Colonel W. E. McLean, editor of the *Journal*, served as marshals during the Indiana segment of Lincoln's funeral procession to Springfield, Illinois. These men were all influential Terre Haute citizens and, according to published reports, devoted to Lincoln and his memory.³¹

Terre Haute newspapers carried articles about Lincoln's death on April 14, 1872, and April 14, 1874. But on April 14, 1873, with Edwin Booth in town, none of the papers mentioned Lincoln at all. Perhaps the editors and townspeople found the situation embarrassing. Any mention of the assassination would have been painful for the visiting star; but the assassin's brother was appearing on the anniversary of the president's death in a theatre — the setting for that tragic deed.³² The result was no mention of Lincoln's death and little mention of *Richelieu* in the newspapers, and the public, with the assassination still fresh in its mind, apparently stayed away from the one symbol of its civic pride—the Grand Opera House.

Fifteen years later Booth returned to Terre Haute with Lawrence Barrett. They performed *Othello* on April 26, 1888, with Barrett in

the title role and Booth as Iago.³³ Within five years Booth was dead. But in 1873, at the age of thirty-nine, he was in full possession of the greatest dramatic powers ever witnessed in America. He appeared in numerous towns that season for one-night stands and coped with faulty companies, personal tragedies, and rude and boistrous audiences in an effort to bring his art to the Midwest and pay off his financial indebtedness. The citizens of Terre Haute, proud of their new Grand Opera House and hurt by the word "provincial" when applied to them, understood the historical and artistic importance of their distinguished theatrical visitor. The mixed civic pride they exhibited at his visit offers an interesting insight into the emerging cultural consciousness of Indiana in the nineteenth century.

NOTES

*John Hanners is Associate Director of Drama at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania.

¹ Neil Harris, "Four Stages of Cultural Growth: The American City," in *Indiana Historical Society Lectures, 1971-1972* (Indianapolis, 1972), 31.

² *Terre Haute City Directory 1868-1869*.

³ C. C. Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County* (2 vols., Chicago, 1908), 1:324. A complete history of the beginnings of the Grand Opera House is contained in Marlene Kalbfleisch Lambert's "The Grand Opera House in Terre Haute, Indiana, 1869-1874" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, Indiana State University, 1972).

⁴ *Terre Haute Journal*, December 19, 1870.

⁵ *Indianapolis Journal*, December 20, 1870.

⁶ When Booth returned from his midwestern tour he abandoned management altogether and handed over his beloved theatre to Junius. Junius fared no better. The theatre folded during the Panic of 1873. It was not alone—so did hundreds of other American theatres, including Terre Haute's Grand Opera House. The New York firm that held its mortgage was forced to foreclose, and the theatre was sold.

⁷ Richard Lockridge, *Darling of Misfortune: Edwin Booth* (New York, 1932), 212.

⁸ Eleanor Ruggles, *The Prince of Players* (New York, 1953), 241. If this melodramatic incident actually took place, it must have been in early February. George C. D. Odell states that Booth's season in New York closed on February 1. *Annals of the New York Stage* (15 vols., New York, 1927-1949), 8:257. By the middle of February Booth was in Chicago and did not return to New York until the Midwest tour was over.

⁹ Edwina Booth Grossman, *Edwin Booth* (reprint; Freeport, New York, 1970), 36. Walter Joyce was a minor New York actor for several years. A. W. Fenno, an old friend of Booth's, had appeared as "2nd Actor" in Booth's famous 1870 New York production of *Hamlet*. He died at age fifty-eight. See Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, 8:257.

¹⁰ The author is indebted to Constance Staley for the information that Booth played Hamlet at Springfield, Illinois, on April 8 and Lafayette, Indiana, on April 9.

¹¹ *Terre Haute Daily Express*, April 10, 1873.

¹² *Ibid.*, April 11, 1873.

¹³ Terre Haute *Evening Gazette*, April 11, 1873. In the same article the writer stated that Booth and his company were traveling to Evansville for performances on the eleventh and twelfth.

¹⁴ Terre Haute *Saturday Evening Mail*, April 12, 1873. The paper did not elaborate on McVicker's drawbacks as a manager.

¹⁵ Charles H. Shattuck, *The Hamlet of Edwin Booth* (Urbana, 1969), 83.

¹⁶ Terre Haute *Daily Express*, April 11, 1873.

¹⁷ Terre Haute *Saturday Evening Mail*, April 12, 1873. The normal seating capacity of the Grand Opera House was 1,400, but standing room could have raised that figure to 1,700 or 1,800.

¹⁸ Terre Haute *Evening Gazette*, April 15, 1873.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, April 11, 1873.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Terre Haute *Daily Express*, April 13, 1873.

²² Terre Haute *Saturday Evening Mail*, April 19, 1873.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Terre Haute *Evening Gazette*, April 15, 1873. The *Gazette* blamed the small turnout on the "inclemency of the weather."

²⁵ Terre Haute *Daily Express*, April 12, 1873.

²⁶ Terre Haute *Saturday Evening Mail*, April 12, 1873.

²⁷ Terre Haute *Journal*, April 14, 1873.

²⁸ Terre Haute *Evening Gazette*, April 14, 1873.

²⁹ Charles Roll, "Indiana's Part in the Nomination of Abraham Lincoln for President in 1860," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 25 (1929), 1-13.

³⁰ H. C. Bradsby, *History of Vigo County* (Chicago, 1891), 559.

³¹ Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County*, 1:309.

³² The fact that Lincoln was shot in a theatre had a profound effect on the American stage. Theatres were forced to close down; some actors, including Edwin Booth, were arrested; and the nation's clergymen roundly denounced the theatrical profession. Good examples are available in post-assassination sermons cited by Carl Sandburg in *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (4 vols., New York, 1939), 4:357-59: Rev. Justin Dewey Fulton, Boston—"He did not die on Mt. Nebo, with his eyes full of heaven. He was shot in a theatre. We are sorry for that. It is a poor place to die in." Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, Washington, D.C.—"Let it [the theatre] stand for years to come as it now stands, silent, gloomy, forlorn, more like a sepulchre than a place of amusement, saying to all passers-by, 'Here the greatest crime of the age was committed by one who was addicted to tragedy and made the stage his home.'" Rev. Duffield, Detroit—"Would Mr. Lincoln had fallen elsewhere than at the very gates of Hell—in the theatre." It would be interesting to discover any sermons delivered by Terre Haute clergymen the day before the Monday performance of *Richelieu*. Did they discourage their parishioners from attending the Grand Opera House?

³³ Lawrence Barrett, at least in the eyes of Terre Hauteans, had eclipsed Booth's star by 1888. The local newspapers were full of Barrett: his temper tantrums, his private railroad car, his demands for a bigger share of ticket sales, and his arguments with the manager of the local theatre. Little mention was made of Booth's activities, and there was no mention of his 1873 appearance.

Another Lincoln-Booth encounter: One Booth kills, another saves, a Lincoln

By Jim Walsh
St. Bede Academy

One ironic occurrence involving Abraham Lincoln's oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln, is unknown to most people.

At least one year before the assassination of his father, Robert was involved in a near-fatal accident on a train while coming home from Harvard University on a school vacation.

If it weren't for the alertness of his rescuer, Robert might never have reached his destination. The name of his savior was Edwin Booth, a well-known Shakespearean actor and the brother of the notorious John Wilkes Booth, his father's assassin.

Letters which give details and verification of the event were collected in a story called "Memories and Letters of Edwin Booth" by William Bispham.

Bispham's work was published in Century Magazine in the November 1893 issue. The letters were acquired by the Illinois State Historical Library in 1948.

In one of the letters which appears in "Memories and Letters of Edwin Booth," Booth describes what happened on the train from his memory of the incident.

He recalls that on that particular day he had started out for New York from Philadelphia.

While he was standing on a platform of a railroad car at the Jersey City railroad station waiting for the train to move, a young lad moving from one car to another lost his balance.

The young man would have fallen between the cars had Edwin not been there to catch him by the collar of his coat and bring him up safely by his side. This young man, whom Booth did not know, seemed to recognize him, and held out his hand to Booth, saying, "That was a narrow escape, Mr. Booth."

The editor of *Century Magazine*, Watson Gilder, later asked Robert Todd Lincoln about the truth of this



A portrait of the Lincoln Family, painted by F. Schell

story which had been published in 1893.

He asked because he had been searching for suitable material to publish in his magazine during 1901, the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Robert, then

president of the Pullman Company in Chicago, wrote a letter of reply to Gilder.

In his letter of Feb. 6, 1909, Lincoln confirmed the truth of the story, but corrected some minor details. Although Booth had said that Lincoln had

been walking between two cars when the accident occurred, Lincoln explained:

The incident occurred while a group of passengers were late at night purchasing their sleeping car places from the conductor who stood on the

station platform at the entrance of the car.

The platform was about the height of the car floor, and there was of course a narrow space between the platform and the car body. There was some crowding, and I happened to be pressed by it against the car body while waiting my turn.

In this situation the train began to move, and by the motion I was twisted off my feet, and had dropped some what, with feet downward into the open space, and was personally helpless, when my coat collar was vigorously seized, and I was quickly pulled up and out to a secure footing on the platform.

Upon turning to thank my rescuer I saw it was Edwin Booth, whose face was of course well known to me, and I expressed my gratitude to him, and in doing so, called him by name.

Some biographers of the Lincoln family have placed the incident in 1863 when Robert Todd Lincoln was working on his bachelor of arts degree at Harvard University (1860-1861), while others say it happened in 1864 when he was attending Harvard Law School (where he remained only about four months).

As the definite year is unclear, so too is an answer to the question of whether Robert told his father of this incident.

Booth's account reveals that two weeks after the incident, he, Booth, received a letter from General Adam Baden who mentioned that Robert had told him about how his life had been saved by Booth.

It was also said that the memory of this rescue gave Edwin Booth some comfort in the troubled times that followed the assassination of Lincoln's father at the hand of Edwin's brother, John Wilkes Booth. *Editor's Note:* This article was published with bibliography in Illinois History Magazine, February 1989 issue.

HISTORIC PLACES IN AMERICA



Birthplace of Edwin Booth, Bel Air, Md.

Edwin Booth, one of America's foremost tragedians, was born at his father's home near Bel Air, Md., on Nov. 13, 1833. His father, Junius Brutus Booth, veteran English Shakespearean actor who had appeared at Covent Garden, London, in 1815, came to America in 1821. As a boy, Edwin traveled with his erratic father whose dramatic ability and intensity verged on insanity at times.

Edwin's stage debut was at Boston, Sept. 10, 1849, when he appeared with his father's company as Tressel in *Richard III*. Two years later he appeared in his father's stead as *Richard III* at the National Theater, New York City. On his return from a foreign tour in 1857 he captivated New York audiences with his brilliant dramatic acting. In 1862 he became manager of the New York Winter Garden Theater and his

Shakespearean productions were of unexampled magnificence. He played *Hamlet* for 100 consecutive nights, an unprecedented record.

In 1864 he and his brothers, Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., and John Wilkes Booth, gave a fine performance of *Julius Caesar*, but following President Lincoln's assassination by his brother John in 1865, Edwin went into retirement. His return to the stage in 1866 was well received by New York audiences and when the Winter Garden Theater burned in 1867, Booth built his own theater and organized an excellent stock company. At the close of the season in 1873 he retired from management of the theater. His spacious Gramercy Park residence he converted into the Players' Club and kept only a single apartment for himself until his death on June 7, 1893.

Next Week: Caleb Pusey House, Chester, Pa.

12/19,

A Footnote to History

EDWIN BOOTH, the great 19th-century American tragedian, was deeply and permanently affected by Abraham Lincoln's assassination at the hand of his brother and fellow actor, John Wilkes Booth.

Nevertheless he was able to exorcise his brother's ghost in a curious way. How it happened was told after his death to the actor Otis Skinner by an old property man, Garrie Davidson, who had served Edwin Booth for many years in various backstage capacities.

One stormy evening in February, 1873, Booth instructed Davidson, then a boy, to wake him at three in the morning. His apartment was over the stage of his theatre. Together Booth and young Davidson went to the furnace room under the theatre. In one corner was a large trunk tied with ropes which Booth directed Davidson to cut. In the trunk lay the costumes of John Wilkes Booth — swords, wigs, a robe from *Othello*, a *Hamlet* hauberk, Mark Antony's toga.

In silence Booth passed the costumes one by one to Garrie Davidson to be burned in the furnace. At length he drew out of the trunk a purple velvet tunic and a cloak trimmed in fur. Both were wrinkled and shabby. Booth sat down on the trunk with the costumes on his knees and wept.

"This was my father's *Richard III* dress," he said. Davidson suggested the costume be saved. But Booth said, "No, put it in with the others."

He asked Davidson to destroy the trunk as well. For a long time the two of them stood watching everything burn. Finally Booth told the boy to shut the furnace door. It was nearly six in the morning when Booth said, "We'll go now." He never alluded to the incident again. □

by Florence Tarlow



13A **BENJAMIN, Judah P.** Noted American Statesman; Secretary of State and War and Attorney General of the Confederacy. A.L.S. 1 p., 4to. New Orleans, Sept. 18, 1856. \$7.50

INTERESTING BUSINESS LETTER, addressed to Peter G. Washington, from the pen of the brilliant statesman who held three portfolios in Jefferson Davis' cabinet.

REFERRING TO THE "TRIO IN B FLAT"
AND SEVERAL SONGS

14 **BEETHOVEN, Ludwig van.** Illustrious German Composer; Greatest Genius in the History of Music. A.L.S. 3 pp., 4to. Leipzig, April 26, 1811. To Messrs. Breitkopf and Hartel; with address. \$375.00

A MAGNIFICENT HOLOGRAPH LETTER FROM THE PEN OF THE GREATEST OF COMPOSERS, addressed to his publishers, the great firm of Breitkopf and Hartel in Leipzig, and referring to the manuscript of his famous "Trio in B Flat" (Opus 97) for the piano, violin, and violoncello, which he is sending to them by his friend, Oliva. In the postscript to the letter Beethoven mentions three of his songs, "The Youth's Battle Song," "The Farewell," and "Meeting Again," which he says can be dedicated to the Archduchess, the consort of the great composer's pupil and friend, Archduke Rudolph. A translation of this superb letter follows:

"My friend Oliva is bringing these lines. I hope you will allow him to share our friendly intercourse and enjoy your society. I have given him a commission to bring you a trio of mine for piano, violin, and violoncello. He has full authority to conclude arrangements with you or refuse. Yesterday I received your package. It has all become very much dearer but the volumes are worth less than usual. What do you say to our finance directors?

In haste, BEETHOVEN.

"The three songs, 'The Youth's Battle Song,' 'The Farewell,' and 'Meeting Again' can be dedicated to the Archduchess."

15 **BIERCE, Ambrose.** Noted American Master of the Short Story. A.L.S. 1 p., 8vo. n. d. To his publisher. \$10.00
Concerning the change of title of one of his stories. SCARCE.

16 **BIERCE, Ambrose.** A.L.S. 2 full pp., 8vo. Leamington, Dec. 21, 1874. \$10.00

LONG AND INTERESTING EARLY LETTER OF THIS ERRATIC GENIUS.

OF SHAKESPEAREAN INTEREST

17 **BOOTH, Edwin.** Celebrated American Shakespearean Actor. A.L.S. 4 full pp., 4to. McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, April 12, 1879. To William Winter. \$60.00

A LONG AND REMARKABLY INTERESTING LETTER written by the great actor to his friend, the noted author and dramatic critic, William Winter. The letter relates to a mortgage on Winter's Staten Island home which Booth had agreed to take, without interest. With the

THOMAS F. MADIGAN

letter Booth sent a check for \$1,000, at the same time making suggestions for an alternative arrangement in connection with the publication and sale of his series of Prompt Books. This letter, which is replete with quotations from Shakespeare, is undoubtedly one of the finest Booth items ever offered for sale. There are two marginal notes explanatory of the contents of the letter written and signed by Winter's son, Jefferson Winter. The letter reads in part:

"... I begin here this evening with Hamlet and close the week with Richard; so, you see how uncertain are our program plans. . . . An idea—anent the P. Books—has occurred to me, which, however, may not accord with your views at all; 'tis but a notion, and is, of course, open to more objections, perhaps, than I am conscious of. 'Tis this:—As there seems to be but a very slim chance to realize more than the expense—if even that,—and scarcely the shadow of any profit to be derived from their sales, owing to the infrequency of my engagements now-a-days, why wouldn't it be a better plan to turn over the entire book-business to me, and instead of my loaning you the thousand dollars on the Mtge, to call it *quits*? This will relieve all sense of obligation. . . . It seems to me that the method I propose will be the wiser one in every sense—for a Mtge is worse than *chills* or *skeeters* about one's home. . . . Besides, you know (alas! I do, too well) how true are William's words—'loan oft loses both itself and *friend*', the latter being by far the more grievous loss. . . . Now, this is not urged in any feeling of hesitation to fulfill my promise—for lo! the enclosure proves my willingness—or from 'any the least' regret for having promised." Etc., etc.

18 BOOTH, Edwin. A.L.S. 3 pp., 8vo. Lynn, July 18, 1885. \$15.00

VERY INTERESTING LETTER deprecating his abilities in the literary line. "Since the receipt of your letter I have earnestly devoted my serious thoughts to the consideration of the subject we discussed, the 'Introduction' for your book, and I feel that I have fulfilled my promise, albeit without any favorable result. Whatever induced me to make it, I can not conceive. A momentary fit of vanity must have blinded me to the difficulty of the task and to my own inability to accomplish it. I must therefore beg of you to forgive me a weakness that has caused you inconvenience and me much concern, for I have really made painful efforts to do something by way of practice, as it were, in the literary line and have abandoned the scheme in utter despair, determined not to make a donkey of myself in that way, however I may do so in other respects." Etc.

19 BOOTH, Edwin. A.L.S. 1 p., 8vo. Baltimore, Jan. 9, 1876. To J. D. Ferguson. \$7.50

"... After a brief rest I shall go to California. So long as my arrangements with Mr. Ford are satisfactory I do not feel justified in entertaining other offers for Baltimore." Etc.

19A BOOTH, Edwin. A.L.S. 2 pp., 8vo. London, Apr. 13, 1881. \$7.50

INTERESTING LETTER WITH SHAKESPEAREAN REFERENCE AND MENTIONING SIR HENRY IRVING. "Only yesterday I sent some music for 'Desdemona' to Irving and now await his reply to questions I asked concerning rehearsals, etc. Who the devil (sure 'tis a devil) has concocted this lie? Perhaps I'd better see Irving at once about it."

